

**CONGESTION ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD**  
Our man prepares to go to the summit

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**30 YEARS OF SEX AND DRUGS AND ROCK 'N ROLL**  
Rolling Stone's most famous covers

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# THE INDEPENDENT

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

Monday 4 May 1998 45p (R50p) No 3,601

## Today's news

### Fashanu is found hanged

JUSTIN FASHANU, the footballer charged with sexually assaulting a teenager in the United States last week, was found dead in a garage in London.

Fashanu, 37, brother of the former England striker John Fashanu and one of the first prominent sportsmen to be open about his homosexuality, was believed to have hanged himself. **Page 3**

### Official Solicitor 'knew of Bell book'

THE Official Solicitor, Peter Harris, knew about the controversial book on child-killer Mary Bell two years ago but advised the author to keep the project quiet.

Gitta Sereny, who has been criticised for paying Bell for co-operating on the book, said she could not warn the families of Bell's victims because of the instructions from Mr Harris, who also provoked a row when he approved a book on the life of the mass murderer Fred West. **Page 2**

### Nazi riddle solved

DNA TESTS have confirmed that a skeleton dug up in Berlin a quarter-century ago are the remains of Martin Bormann, Hitler's notorious deputy.

Bormann has been long rumoured to have escaped from Germany in the dying days of the Third Reich. But the tests make it more likely he died in May 1945, the last confirmed date he was seen alive. **Page 8**

### Peace-talks gloom

THE MIDDLE EAST conference brokered by Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, opens in London today amid gloomy predictions as to its likely success.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli leader, and Yasser Arafat, for the Palestinians, are due to hold separate talks with Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, to break the current impasse. **Page 10**

### Poll woe for Labour

LABOUR is preparing for some harsh defeats in the local council elections this week, in areas including the previously rock-solid heartlands of Sheffield and Doncaster. **Page 6**

## Business news

### The £10bn merger

POWERGEN, Britain's second-largest electricity company, is discussing a merger with an American power supplier. A deal with Houston Industries would form a company with a market value of £10bn. **Page 17**

## Sports news

### Dettoni on form

FRANKIE DETTORI ended a run of frustrating near-misses yesterday to clinch his first victory in the Sagitta 1,000 Guineas at Newmarket, riding Cape Verdi. **Sport tabloid**

## Arsenal reach their Premier goal



Gunners on top: Arsenal fans celebrating their team's success in clinching the Premiership. At Christmas they had been written off. Yesterday the team paraded around Highbury amid a sea of red and white, after beating Everton 4-0 to secure their 11th league title. Meanwhile, Middlesbrough scored four goals in 17 minutes to seal their immediate return to the Premiership. **Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid**

## Blair tries to halt markets' euro jitters

By Colin Brown and Jeremy Warner

TONY BLAIR yesterday rejected criticism of his handling of the fudged deal over the appointment of the head of the European Central Bank, and sent a clear signal to the financial markets before they open for trading today that "the euro is going to be a success".

Amid fears that Britain may pay the price for the nearly botched compromise between the Germans and the French, brokered by Mr Blair, the Treasury will be anxiously watching the markets today.

The European currencies and bond markets are expected to give the euro a damp welcome, with sentiment dented by fears that the European Central Bank's policy could be politically influenced.

The European Union's move to split the term of the European Central Bank presidency between Dutch and French candidates opened the way for the independent central bank to be subject to political interference, many analysts said yesterday.

"The market reaction will be disappointment at the split term of the ECB," said Cesar Molinas, co-head of European economic and fixed income research at Merrill Lynch.

"It's an example of how far politicians will go to defend national pride. It's not a good omen of how the relationship with the ECB and governments

will develop in the future."

But in a clear signal to steady the market, Mr Blair said: "The euro is a strong currency and the provisions of the [Maastricht] treaty are to be upheld in full without any derogation at all."

Defending his role, he added: "We could have wrapped this whole thing up 8, 10, 11 hours ago, but then it would have been something which we could not say was in accordance with the treaty."

Some of his European partners blamed Mr Blair, as holder of the EU presidency, for being ill-prepared for the most important decision that the European Union may ever reach. Austria's Prime Minister Viktor Klima said they had "never seen anything like it". Jean Claude Juncker, the Luxembourg Premier, criticised Mr Blair for focusing on Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, French president Jacques Chirac and Wim Kok of the Netherlands, and not briefing the others.

Irish Republic sources say they were kept in the dark and the Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, who praised Mr Blair on the peace settlement in Northern Ireland, said: "Personally, I think if it had been left to 18 in the room we would have got to bed earlier."

There was also strong reaction from Bonn yesterday where one of Chancellor Kohl's leading economic advisers said the deal was against the spirit of the

Maastricht treaty, while a leader of the business community said the EU leaders had come up with a "lazy compromise". The Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi accused the British of being "ill-prepared".

The talks were plunged into crisis when Mr Chirac refused a compromise unless it was in writing, leading to a night of desperate haggling to avoid a disastrous collapse. It ended with a "family photo" at midnight with the strain showing clearly in the faces of the leaders.

The deal brokered by Mr Blair gave the Germans their demand for someone they could trust at the head of the bank, to ensure the Euro is a hard currency. Mr Blair announced that Helmut Kohl's choice, Wim Duisenberg, would have an eight-year term as president of the ECB. But he had given a verbal assurance to a special late-night council of ministers at Mr Chirac's insistence that he would step down for a Frenchman, expected to be Mr Chirac's choice, Jean-Claude Trichet, after the notes and coins begin circulating for the euro in 2002.

Mr Blair said: "If this currency is to succeed, it has to be a strong currency and a currency run in accordance with the treaty, not a currency that is pushed this way and that way with the treaty by the independent European Central Bank."

Market reaction, page 17

## British link to African coup plot

By Andrew Buncombe

A SENIOR diplomat is to be questioned in a criminal investigation into allegations that British authorities supported mercenaries who helped overthrow a foreign government.

In an unprecedented step, Peter Penfold, the High Commissioner for Sierra Leone, is to be interviewed this week by officers from the National Investigation Service (NIS), an arm of HM Customs and Excise. The move follows claims that Mr Penfold may have asked the mercenaries to help overthrow a regime which had taken power a year earlier.

Former British officer Lt-Col Tim Spicer, who was involved in the alleged plot, said last night that he

"understood and still believe that we were acting with the approval of Her Majesty's Government in assisting to restore President Kabbah".

Tory MP John Redwood demanded that the Government make it clear whether there had been any collusion. "I want Robin Cook to come before the Commons and say what has been happening," he said. "We need to get to the bottom of this."

The allegations centre on Mr Penfold's links with the "military consultants" Sandline International and its chief executive Lt-Col Spicer. The Foreign Office admitted last March that Mr Penfold had spoken to Sandline, but refused to say what the conversations had been about. The discussions took

place in Conakry, Guinea, where Sierra Leone's elected president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah had been exiled following a coup in May 1997.

The NIS officers will question Mr Penfold, a career diplomat and former governor of the British Virgin Islands, about Sandline's supply of 30 tonnes of arms and training to rebels supporting Mr Kabbah and the Nigerian army which also backed him. "Central to the inquiry will be whether Mr Penfold knew about the arms supply and whether he was involved," a Customs source said.

The arms and ammunition were flown into the former colony of Sierra Leone from Bulgaria on or around 21 February, Mr Kabbah, who attended the Commonwealth summit

in Edinburgh last year while still in exile, was restored to power in March. Any shipment of arms would have breached UN sanctions, imposed on Sierra Leone last November. However, Sandline's solicitors yesterday claimed the company had committed no offence.

Yesterday, the Foreign Office said there had been no ministerial approval for Sandline's actions and that it was carrying out its own inquiry. Last night at Westminster it was felt the affair had the potential to be very embarrassing to the Government. There was also a feeling that Mr Penfold may be used as a scapegoat to allow the Government to distance itself from the incident.

**Guns for hire, page 3**

## \*A life, and the future of boxing, hang in the balance

WHEN Spencer Oliver was carried to an ambulance at the Royal Albert Hall on Saturday, his body strapped to a stretcher, an oxygen mask encasing his bruised face, members of boxing's brotherhood stood around in anxious huddles, like relatives at a mining disaster.

There was not the shock of spectators coming to understand a grim truth about boxing (injuries in the professional ring have caused more than 400 deaths since 1939) but that of men realising they were not insured to the perils of a sport that should never be referred to as a game. Richie Davis, who had refereed an earlier bout, had tears in his eyes when it became

### Ken Jones

obvious that Oliver's life was in peril after being knocked out in the 10th round of a European super-bantamweight defence against the Ukrainian challenger, Sergei Devakov. "I love this sport," Davis said, "but I have never been as close to anything like this before. It's awful."

Last night Oliver was in a "critical but stable" condition after brain surgery to remove a blood clot. The spokesman at the National Hospital, Queen's Square, London, said he was on a ventilator.

Safeguards that were further improved after Gerald McLellan was blinded and crippled by

injuries sustained in a loss to Nigel Benn in 1995 gave Oliver the best possible chance of survival, but cannot remove the inevitability of tragic events.

His plight will strengthen the case against boxing on grounds that it is a vicious business that should have no place in a civilised society. If motives, not statistics, make the most powerful argument against professional boxing, Saturday's incident causes some of us who have spent many years reporting from the ring to wonder whether it is worth the candle.

Oliver's condition is made especially poignant by the absence of bravado from his na-



Oliver: in 'critical' condition

ture and the potential that brought an overwhelming vote from British boxing writers two weeks ago for Young Fighter of the Year.

Saturday's defence, one that

did not appear to present any great difficulties for Oliver, carried the possibility of a world title contest later this year.

Instead, it turned out to be a hard contest that left the 23-year-old from Barnet fighting for his life. Put down by a left hook in the first round, hurt again in the sixth, Oliver appeared to be gaining control of the contest when his head caught the full force of a right hook after two minutes and 10 seconds of the tenth round. Sent over sideways, he tried to struggle up but fell back to the canvas and was counted out.

Clearly in a serious condition, his worried supporters were silent. A girl who had

urged Oliver on throughout the contest wept. Old fighters followed his departure anxiously. Did heat caused by television lights above the ring combine with difficulties in weight-making to dehydrate Oliver? Leaving the arena, I came across the former world flyweight champion Charlie Magri. "They say the kid's in a bad way," I said. Magri embraced me. "I'm praying for him," he said.









# Justin Fashanu found hanged in lock-up garage

By Kate Watson-Smyth

JUSTIN FASHANU, the footballer charged with sexually assaulting a 17-year-old boy in the United States, has been found dead in a garage in east London, police said yesterday. The former striker, once rated one of the country's brightest young stars, had fled to Britain following the charge and police sources said it is believed he hanged himself from the rafters of the garage.

His body was found by a member of the public in a lock-up garage, used as a car park in Shoreditch on Saturday afternoon.

A post-mortem examination proved inconclusive but further tests are being carried out. A spokesman for Scotland Yard said they were not treating the death as suspicious. Eyewitnesses said he had been seen drinking in one of the nearby gay bars on Friday afternoon. He had seemed "chipper".

The unnamed teenager allegedly assaulted by Fashanu in the US was one of six - all below the drinking age for Maryland of 21 - who spent the evening drinking beer at Fashanu's house. He claimed he went to bed around midnight and woke in Fashanu's bed eight hours later to find he was being sexually assaulted by the football star.

Fashanu, 37, a born-again Christian, was questioned and charged following the alleged incident on 23 March. A warrant for his arrest was issued by police in Howard County, Maryland, a week later when they arrived at his flat and found it empty and his clothes gone. According to court documents, a medical examination found evidence of sexual assault.

Fashanu, who denied the allegations, was charged with second-degree sexual assault - an offence which carries a maximum 20-year jail term and first- and second-degree assault. Eric Hall, a football agent

who arranged for Fashanu to sell the story of his homosexuality to a newspaper in 1990, said yesterday that he felt "so guilty" after illness prevented him from returning a telephone call from Fashanu last week. "I had kept in touch with him, and little did I know last week he phoned me from America. I hadn't heard from him for quite a few months," Fashanu, the first prominent British sportsman to be openly gay, had a notoriously difficult relationship with his younger brother John, the former Wimbledon and England striker.

On Friday, John said he had not spoken to his brother for seven years, but yesterday his



Fashanu: Accused in US of sex assault on teenage boy

lawyer, Henri Brandman, said he was "shocked and distressed. Although there were periods of disagreement between them, there were also many occasions when they have enjoyed special times together", he said.

Justin Fashanu was acknowledged as the better player of the two brothers but the macho world of football did not take kindly to his revelation of homosexuality eight years ago.

He was speedily dropped by Nottingham Forest, in the First Division (now the Premiership), and found himself playing for Torquay United in the Third Division. He was bitter about his fate and blamed what

he saw as a deep-seated prejudice in the English game. "You have to understand that footballers are very narrow-minded people. When you put yourself in the firing line, you are open to attack," he said.

He did not help himself when lurid details of his sex life, including fabricated claims of affairs with senior Tory MPs, were splashed across the tabloid newspapers when he came out in a series of interviews in 1990.

He was sacked from his last British team, Edinburgh-based Hearts, and moved to Ellicott City to coach Maryland Mania Club, a new professional team set to start playing the second-division A-league next year.

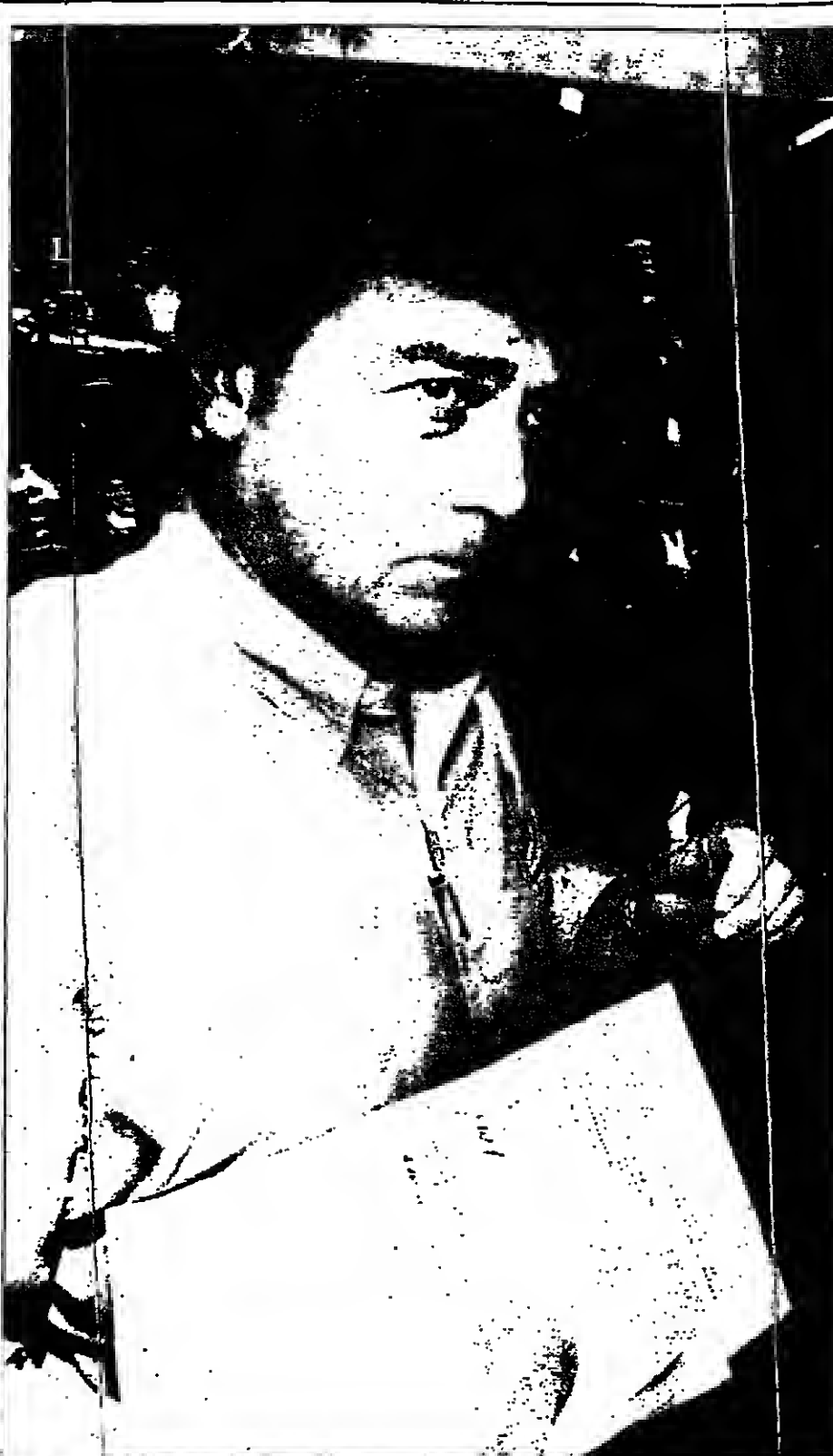
It was a long way down for the striker who was the first black player to be transferred for a £1m fee.

In a final humiliation he lost touch with his brother - the result of an alleged attempt by John to dissuade him from revealing his homosexuality with a large cash payment.

What little stability there was in his life came from the couple who fostered John and Justin, aged five and six. They were taken in by Alf and Betty Jackson after their parent's marriage broke up. But despite their respectable upbringing, his brother has had his fair share of controversy. Last year he was acquitted of conspiracy to fix Premier League matches after a 45-day trial.

John, former co-presenter of *Gladitorial*, was accused of being the middle-man between a gambling syndicate in Indonesia and two English-based goalkeepers, his team-mate Hans Segers and Bruce Grobbelaar, once of Liverpool. Since the trial he has kept out of the public eye and devoted himself to his business activities.

Justin had also kept a low profile until last week when, it can only be assumed, the shame of the charges against him caused him to take his own life. **Obituary, page 16**



Spicer: "We're not very transparent ... it's the nature of the business" Photograph: Reuters

**CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE**  
The most serious incident to involve Lt-Col Timothy Spicer was when his mercenaries were hired by the government of Papua New Guinea to put down a rebellion on a small island. The deal, worth £2.5m, went terribly wrong when he was deceived by soldiers

opposed to the contract struck by Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan. Spicer wound up hand-cuffed, humiliated and facing charges of illegally possessing a firearm.

**TUMBLEDOWN TIM**  
Of the Falklands War, the conflict that earned him the nickname "Tumble-down Tim", he wrote of his own men: "The last I saw was completely unprepared for going to war. Some of our officers ... had become social soldiers."

One colleague said he was a maverick who always marched to a different tune. Another was less kind: "He was the most arrogant, pompous bastard I have ever met."

## Guns for hire from a soldier of fortune

IN THE NEWS

TIM SPICER

FROM a glass-fronted office on London's once fashionable King's Road, Lt-Col Tim Spicer runs a company which provides soldiers, guns and know-how to those who can afford to pay, writes Andrew Buncombe.

A former British army officer who served in the Gulf and the Falklands War, Lt-Col Spicer is now a mercenary whose company Sandline International, has sent troops to all parts of the globe.

To many, the mention of a mercenary conjures images of stubbly-chinned desperadoes chasing their luck. Lt-Col Spicer is anything but. While things can go wrong, as they indeed did for Sandline in 1997 when they were flown out of Papua New Guinea at gunpoint, Lt-Col Spicer leaves nothing to chance.

"[Mercenary is] an interesting word. But I object to the image it conjures up," he once said. "In most cases it is derogatory. It implies ill-discipline and thuggery. We shy away from that image. Discipline and performance-wise, the people we employ have to be of a level of a First World army."

When pressed about his trade, Lt-Col Spicer says his company will only work only for sovereign governments - always legally - and does nothing that might conflict with the national interests of Britain or other friendly powers.

Lt-Col Spicer himself does not fit the image of one of the "Dogs of War" popularised by the likes of Frederick Forsyth. Firm but affable, he dresses casually and keeps trim by regular sessions of squash and skiing.

But a military man he most certainly is. He was born in October 1952 into a military family and was educated at a public school before spending several years "drifting around the world".

On his return, he started to pursue a military career and found his way to the Royal Mil-

itary Academy at Sandhurst. It was clear from an early stage that he was exceptional and in 1976 he won the Sword of Honour for the best cadet of his year. On leaving he was commissioned into the exclusive Scots Guards regiment.

In the Falklands, serving as a captain, he nearly died from the blast of an exploding artillery shell on Mount Tumbledown, one of the last major obstacles before the capture of Port Stanley.

A series of promotions followed and during the Gulf conflict he served as military assistant to General Sir Peter de la Billière, the British commander.

His own command in Northern Ireland in 1992-3 won him an OBE, and his final posting - prior to taking a job in the City - was as spokesman for General Sir Michael Rose, UN forces chief in Bosnia.

But the City did not suit, and within a year he had left to set up Sandline, details surrounding the creation of which remain scarce.

"A lot of people say we're not very transparent," he has admitted. "And that's true enough. It's the nature of the business."

It is known however that Sandline does have close links with a number of businesses owned by Tony Buckingham, a former North Sea diver turned businessman. His main businesses, Heritage Oil and Gas, Branch Energy and Diamond Works, specialise in operating in some of the most physically demanding and politically turbulent areas in the world. Very pointedly Diamond Works owns diamond concessions in Sierra Leone.

## Kidnapped British family freed unharmed by Yemeni tribesmen

By Kate Watson-Smyth

A BRITISH family held hostage in the Yemen for the past two weeks has been released by tribesmen, the British embassy said yesterday.

David Mitchell, his wife Caroline, and their 14-year-old son, Ben, were last night travelling to the capital Sanaa and were expected to spend the evening in a hotel before meeting the British ambassador.

The Mitchells were kidnapped on 17 April by five members of the Bani Dhabyan tribe and held near the town of Knoum, 100 miles from the capital.

Mr Mitchell, 48, an English teacher with the British Council, was driving his wife and son to the airport in Aden to put them on a flight home after they had visited him during the Easter holidays.

Sheik Mohammed al-Ruwaisan, who negotiated the family's release, promised their abductors that they would not be prosecuted and that their demands would be looked into by the government, the official said.

The tribesmen had demanded an undisclosed ransom as well as the construction of more roads in their area. They also asked the government to return a four-wheel drive vehicle that was seized from them in March.

They agreed to release the Mitchells after troops, armed with automatic weapons, who were sent



The Mitchell family, released at the weekend after being held for two weeks. The abductors have been told they will not be prosecuted

to Knoum to put pressure on them, were dispersed.

The family had been receiving food, medicine and clothing through tribal mediators.

Mr Mitchell has worked in Yemen for two years but the rest of the family returned to Sidley, east

Sussex, last year. A Foreign Office spokesman said: "We are aware of reports that the Mitchells have been released and we are trying our best to check them out."

Pat Reigh, a church elder and friend of Mrs Mitchell, who is a deacon at Sidley Baptist Church, said

the family's friends were awaiting confirmation of the reports.

"It will be thrilling if it's true, it really will," he said.

"Over the last two weeks the church has been meeting twice a day to pray for the family, so they have been very much in our thoughts."

Large swaths of Yemen are virtually lawless and ruled by armed tribesmen who kidnap foreigners to demand money or press for concessions from the government.

Eleven foreigners have been taken hostage so far this year: all were released unharmed.

## Safe-house plan for police informers

By Jason Bennetto  
Crime Correspondent

PLANS for a national network of safe houses for informers are being considered by senior police officers. The moves are part of a wider strategy aimed at coping with the increasing problem of how to tackle threats and violence against witnesses to crime.

Seven forces run their own protection units for the small number of informers and witnesses who are at risk of violence and even death. A further 12 forces are believed to have specialist protection officers. In extreme cases witnesses can be relocated and even given a new identity. The Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo) is considering a national network of safe houses or expert officers which forces could contact for help. Best practice guidelines are also being compiled.

The potential dangers of an informer or witnesses having his cover blown was revealed in February when James Lawson, 40, was shot dead as he sat in his home in Hook, Hampshire. Mr Lawson, a police informer, was apparently the victim of a contract killing.

It is believed that he had been moved to the area for his own safety after giving evidence against drug dealers at an Old Bailey trial in 1988,

but his true identity was discovered after he bragged about his past.

Among the measures being considered to help combat low level intimidation of witnesses is the greater availability of electronic protection, such as fitting alarms in homes, hidden cameras and listening bugs, and providing mobile phones to call for help in emergencies. The problem is particularly acute for those living on housing estates or in close knit communities.

Assistant Chief Constable Norman Bettison, of West Yorkshire police, who is heading the Acpo working group, said: "We are concerned about the general atmosphere of fear that exists in some of the housing estates in the country."

"The reason for the concern is that not only is it vital that people can help us as witnesses, but also where you have residents who are in fear of yobs it tends to encourage more crime."

"It's more often intimidation, rather than actual damage or physical violence. The most powerful thing we can do is to mobilise the determination not to be oppressed."

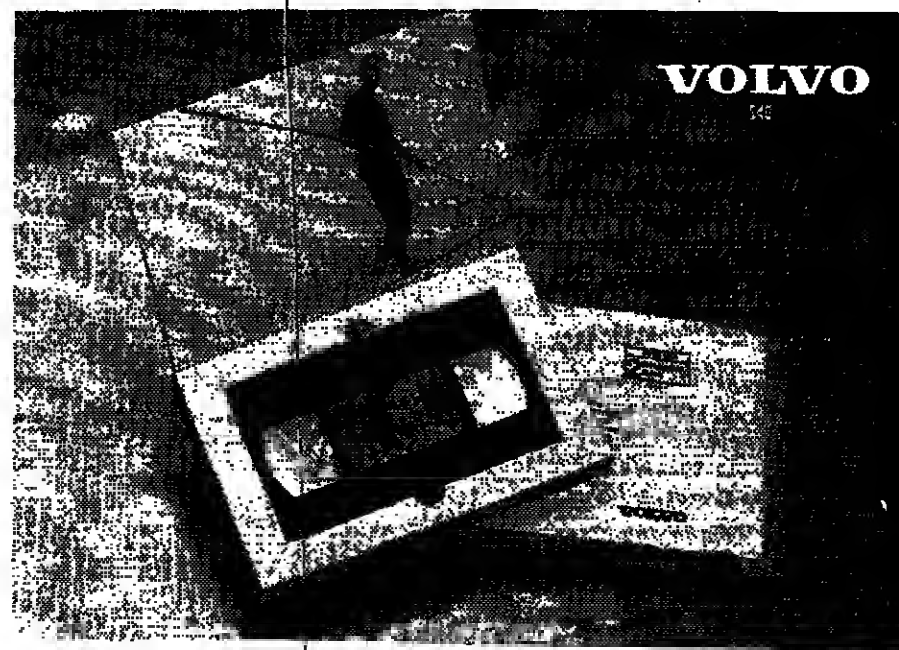
On the question of more serious threats, he said: "The higher level of intimidation is where major criminals are making serious threats to witnesses. This is happening more, but it is not widespread."

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# Schools should give lessons in working life

By Ben Russell  
Education Correspondent

**FAR-REACHING** changes to the way children are taught are required to give them the skills they need to get a job, according to an influential report to be published this week.

The emphasis on getting five good GCSEs should be shifted in favour of giving all school leavers key skills in areas such as English, maths, computers and social skills, says a study by a team of social policy experts at the London School of Economics.

The researchers condemn the school system for leaving large numbers of people with few or no qualifications. The report says: "Britain is unique in devising a school-based qualification system in which the majority of children are defined as failures. In fact, any system in

which even a minority of children consider themselves to be failures is shameful, as well as ineffective."

The study provides heavy-weight academic backing for the Government's campaign to raise standards in the Three Rs and other basic skills. It calls for schools to be given targets for increasing the employability of children, as well as their academic grades, and provide work-based education for children from as young as 11.

The researchers also urged schools to extend the so-called key skills to include social skills identified as crucial by employers. One businessman told academics: "I was surprised at how little students knew about things that are so basic at interview: shaking hands, smiling and looking people in the eye. Yet these basics are so important if the kids are going to have a chance."

The report, by staff at the LSE's Department of Social Policy, will strengthen the case for radical changes to the school system in the Government's flagship education action zones. The zones, which will be introduced from September, are designed to raise standards of the Three Rs in deprived areas by linking businesses with groups of 10 to 20 schools. David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, has urged radical action in the first 25 zones, which can tear up the national curriculum and change teachers' contracts to further their quest to improve standards.

The report studied education-business partnerships in Britain and abroad, focusing on schemes designed to help school leavers find a job. Mark Kleinman, one of the report's authors, said it was vital for businesses to get involved in

schools if schemes to improve the educational standards and job prospects of young people were to be successful.

He said: "If you concentrate on the children who get five or more GCSEs at grade C or above then you are saying that about half of children are failures. Around 55 per cent of people don't get that, and realistically a majority or a large minority are not going to get that. We are saying there should be a benchmark that all pupils should be able to hit."

But Professor Alan Smithers, director of the Centre for Education and Employment Research at Brunel University, warned that the emphasis on basic skills could create a second-class education system for children unsuited to academic courses. He said: "We want them to have decent, recognised qualifications."



White wedding: Martin Bell, the Independent MP for Tatton, kissing his daughter Melissa after her marriage yesterday to Major Peter Bracken (left) at St Oswald's church, Lower Peover, Cheshire. Photograph: Dan Chung/Reuters

## 'Bill' star dies at clinic after pub drinking session

THE actor Kevin Lloyd, who starred as Detective Constable Tosh Lines in ITV's *The Bill*, has died after drinking at a pub, police said. Colleagues yesterday spoke of their "shock and sadness" at the death of the father-of-seven, who had been drinking at a village pub on Saturday near the Staffordshire clinic where he was battling alcoholism.

A spokesman for the Dove Clinic in Rolleston, where he collapsed, said the 49-year-old star had booked in last Tuesday - hours after being told that he had been sacked from his £130,000-a-year role. He added: "Despite all efforts Mr Lloyd failed to respond to clinical inputs and was in the process of being discharged. Tragically on Saturday Mr Lloyd fell into unconsciousness after drinking alcohol and staff were unable to resuscitate."

Billy Murray, who plays Detective Sergeant Don Beech in *The Bill* said the cast was "shocked and saddened" at the news of Lloyd's death and that he would be greatly missed. "Kevin was Tosh. His life mirrored his character's life," he said. Lloyd was himself the son of a policeman who died when his car skidded off the road in an emergency call, leaving his mother a widow at the age of 49. His own marriage broke up in 1995 after 22 years.

Obituary, page 16

## Jail locks changed after alert

TWO high-security jails were yesterday revealed to be at the centre of breakout scares. Locks had to be replaced in a six-day operation at Maidstone jail in Kent after a tip-off about a possible breakout, a Prison Service spokesman said. And a replica key was found during a three-day search at another Kent prison, Swaleside on the Isle of Sheppey, also after a tip-off.

New locks were installed at Maidstone prison - which houses killer Winston Silcott - reportedly after the seizure of key impressions from a driver stopped in Staffordshire. The operation cost up to £500,000, according to the *Sunday Mirror*. The Prison Service spokesman said: "It followed information received that there was a possible key compromise. The regimes were slightly curtailed in terms of some of the educational activities, but in general the prison ran normally."

## Police probe death blaze

A MEMBER of one of Scotland's most notorious families is believed to have died in a fire at his home which police are investigating. The victim is thought to be a member of the Graham family, once known as the "family from hell", who gained notoriety in Glenrothes, Fife, and whose behaviour prompted public debate on what could be done about anti-social neighbours. The family later moved to the North-east fishing town of Fraserburgh.

A fire broke out in a tenement flat in the town yesterday and the body of a man was later found. Police confirmed they were investigating the fire, but would not confirm that they were treating it as suspicious. They confirmed the flat was occupied by the Graham family, but have not released the identity of the dead man. "There is a team inquiring into the cause of the fire", a spokesman said.

## Agony over pipe tragedy

THE mother of a 10-year-old girl who drowned when she was sucked into a river overflow pipe yesterday spoke of her agony over the tragedy. Naomi Sims was trapped in the 12in diameter pipe for up to 10 minutes after falling into the river as she played with a friend. Naomi, a strong swimmer, was pulled to safety by firefighters but she died five hours later in hospital.

Her mother, Bridget Hogg, told how she had warned her not to play near the pipe in the river Glyme, which runs across near-by Blenheim Palace at Woodstock, Oxfordshire. "I'd allowed Naomi to go out for a walk with a friend from school but she knew she wasn't to go near the river. I told them they could go around the block but that was all. But they must have gone to play by the pipe instead because children often play by there," she said. "That pipe has been left like that since I was young. I just think something has got to be done now to prevent this happening to another family."

## Detective held in drugs bust

A SENIOR detective has been arrested as part of an investigation into a drugs gang. The officer, a member of Scotland Yard's Criminal Intelligence Branch, is believed to have handled information between police informants and undercover colleagues. He was among 13 people arrested following a four month surveillance operation by customs officers which led to the recovery of drugs worth £10m at premises in Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

## Parents of 'lost' boy quizzed

POLICE and social services officials are questioning the parents of a toddler who was found apparently abandoned at Heathrow Airport. The boy, aged between 18 months and two years, was found in a Burger King in Terminal 3 on Saturday night.

## Winning lottery numbers

THE winning numbers in Saturday's £8.2m National Lottery draw are 2, 4, 16, 24, 29, 49. The bonus number is 47.

To those  
of you who  
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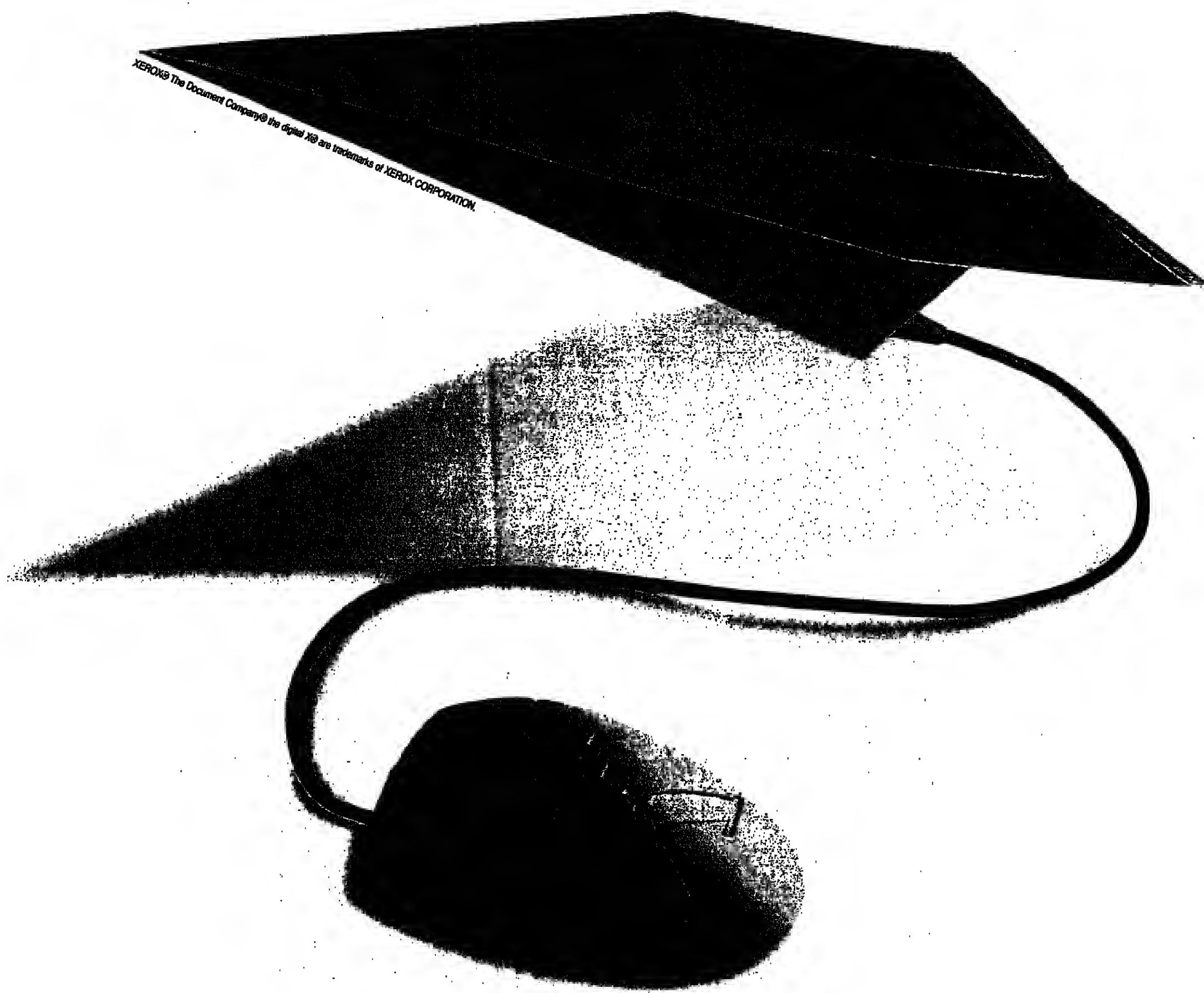
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# Labour heads for little local difficulty

Fran Abrams and David Walker look ahead to Thursday's council elections

LABOUR is preparing for a string of defeats in some of its safest "heartland" councils this week as the Tories try to claw back seats they lost while at their lowest ebb four years ago. The party fears bad news in areas it formerly regarded as rock-solid territory, including Lambeth, Liverpool, Sheffield and Doncaster.

Thursday's elections could

prove depressing to Labour despite its popularity. Some polls show a 4 per cent swing to the Government since last May, but that may not be enough to prevent the losses. All seats in the 32 London boroughs are up for re-election, as well as those on the Isle of Wight. A third of seats fall vacant in the 36 metropolitan councils, including Birmingham, Leeds and Man-

chester, in 88 shire districts ranging from Basildon through Oxford to Worthing, and in nine unitary councils including Bristol, Stoke and Swindon.

A leaked memo to a minister recently described Sheffield, where Labour holds 55 seats to the Liberal Democrats' 31, as "a heartland area with a possibility of loss in 1999/2000."

In Lambeth, which has been beset by corruption scandals, the Liberal Democrats are already the biggest party, with 25 seats to Labour's 22. They hope they may win overall control. Labour might also cease to be the biggest party in Liverpool, where losses have left it with 49 seats to the Liberal Democrats'

41. Labour will retain power in Doncaster, where it holds 58 out of 63 seats, but expects losses as a result of the "Donnygate" councillors' expenses scandal. The Conservatives hope to regain control of London bor-

oughs such as Barnet, where they are still the largest party but without a majority, and Croydon, where Labour holds power with 40 seats to their 30. They also hope to win back Kingston, Redbridge, Brent and Waltham Forest.

The Liberal Democrats point out that even if the Conservatives were to win back 500 seats that would only put them on the same footing as in 1990, when Margaret Thatcher was beset by poll-tax protests. Polling experts do not believe their performance will be anything like that good.

John Curtice, deputy director of the Centre for Research in Elections and Social Trends, said recent by-election results suggested the Conservatives could gain 200 seats, but the true figure might be nearer to 100. "If Labour comes away from this losing less than 100 seats I think they would be de-

lighted. If they got more than 40 per cent of the vote they would be able to claim to have done better than any previous government has done at this stage of the electoral cycle in the last 20 years," he said.

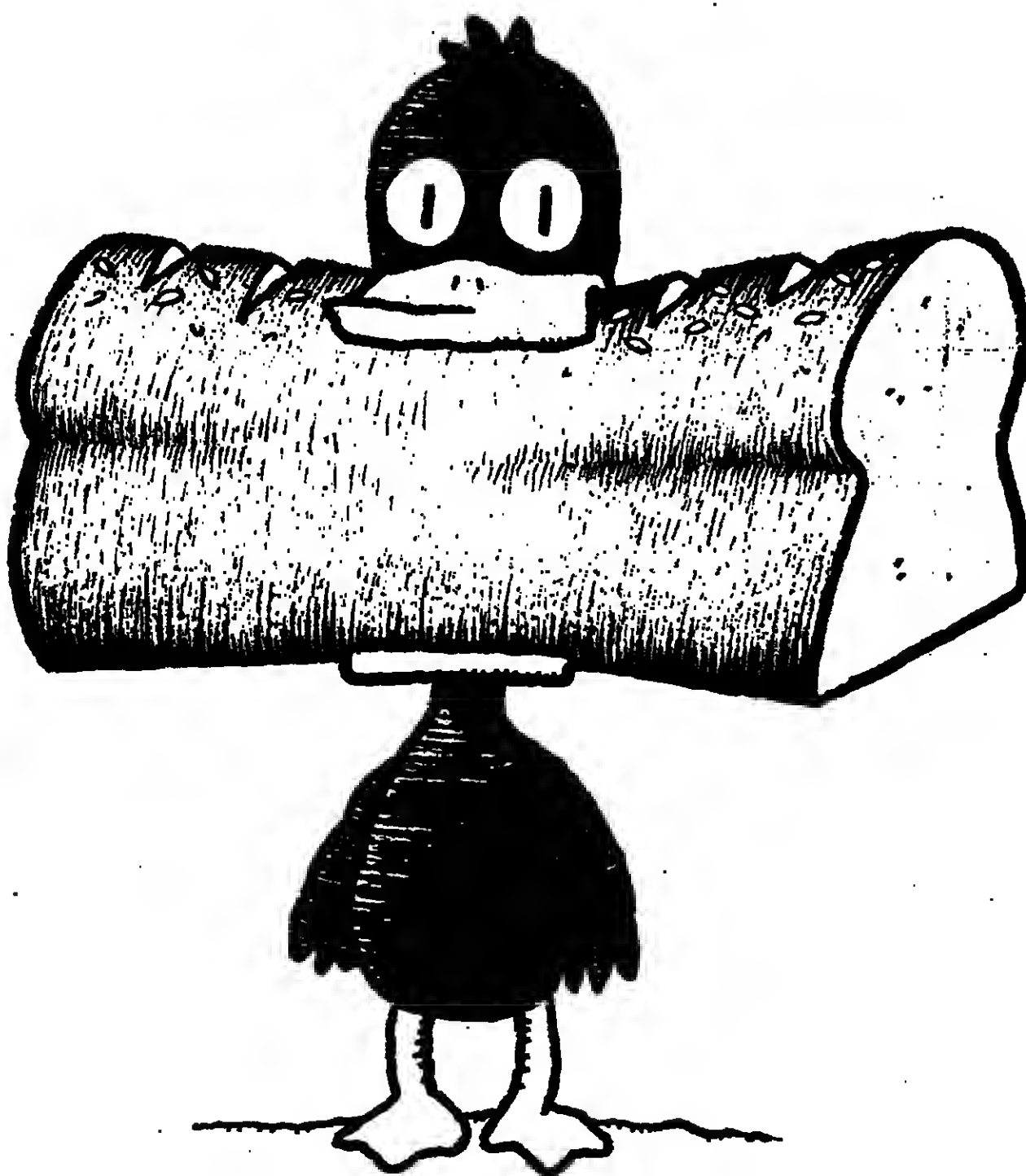
If there were a swing against the Tories, they could lose such rock-solid bastions as local Conservative as Havering, where they now have a majority of four seats. Christopher Chope, Conservative Party vice-chairman with responsibility for local government, said his party's canvassers were receiving encouragement on the doorstep. "I have always hoped that more people would vote on local issues than national ones. That in the end is what local elections are about," he said. A Labour spokesman said his party would do far better than the Conservatives had done while they were in power. "They had the three worst sets of local election results ever in 1994, '95 and '96. We think ours will be very respectable," he said.

There was also a warning last night that a low turn-out in the simultaneous referendum on a London mayor and assembly would damage the mandate of the figurehead official. The turn-out was widely expected to be even lower than the 40 per cent average for council elections, even in London, but the campaign group London First said anything less than 50 per cent would send a signal that Londoners were uninterested in the future of the city.



Sorry state: Leader of Doncaster council Malcolm Glover apologising for the 'Donnygate' scandal, which could damage Labour's Thursday  
Photograph: Graham

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## Prescott scorns PM's teenybopper

By Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

JOHN PRESCOTT dismissed one of the Prime Minister's policy advisers as a "teenybopper" yesterday after the official criticised his transport plans for being too green.

The Deputy Prime Minister also suggested that although Geoffrey Norris was an employee of the Prime Minister his views did not always count.

"Who's Mr Norris? Mr Norris is an official in the department. We sometimes call them teenyboppers. You know what I mean?" he said when questioned on the matter during a BBC television interview.

Mr Norris had written to Mr Prescott under the Prime Minister's name warning that plans for a transport White Paper were going too far and were too "anti-car". The memo was revealed in the *Independent on Sunday* yesterday.

Mr Prescott said Britain had accepted legal targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases and must make "difficult choices" to fulfil them.

Dismissing the memo, he said: "That doesn't make it Number 10 policy. I can tell you, as the one who has responsibility for this matter, I want peo-

ple to use their cars less. I don't necessarily have to force them into that position. That happily happens in Europe and they do it because they've got a better public transport system."

"Yes there may be difficult choices. I don't think they're as difficult as people think they are."

His plans reportedly include powers for councils to levy "congestion charges" on motorists who bring their cars into towns and cities at peak times as well as heavy levies on "private, non-residential parking" designed to hit those who use their cars to go to work or shop.

Shops, offices and factories could be charged for parking spaces they provide, as would out-of-town supermarkets. The money raised from these schemes could be used by councils to finance transport projects.

Mr Prescott insisted he had the backing of the Prime Minister. "Tony Blair is very strong about the environment. He's very strong about public transport policy. I've no doubt about that," he said.

Mr Prescott also denied that the White Paper had been delayed. "No. It's in the first week or the second week of June. That's what was intended. Put your money on it," he said.

### DAILY POEM

what comes after this

By Lucille Clifton

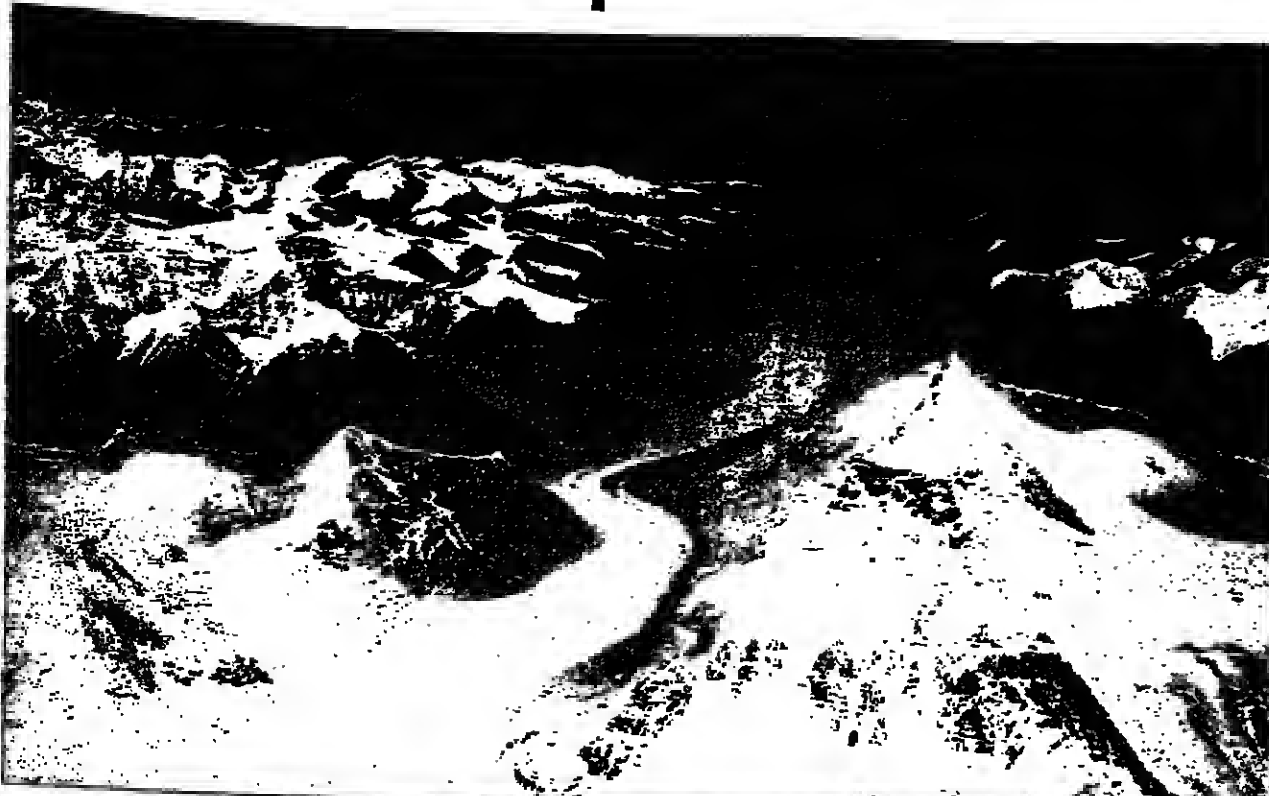
water earth fire air  
i can scarcely remember  
gushing down through my mother  
onto the family bed  
but the dirt of eviction  
is still there  
and the burning bodies of men  
i have tried to love

through the southern blinds  
narrow memories enter the room  
i had not counted on ice  
nor clay nor the uncertain hiss  
of an old flame water earth fire  
it is always unexpected and  
i wonder what is coming  
after this whether it is air  
or it is nothing

This poem comes from *The Terrible Stories* (Slow Dancer Press, £6.99), the first British publication by the acclaimed US poet Lucille Clifton. She will be reading tomorrow, 5 May, at 8.45pm at the Barbican Centre, London EC2.



# Full moon promises a cure for summit fever



**On top of the world:** This view north over Tibet awaits awaiting Stephen Goodwin if his attempt to climb Everest is successful. A full moon a week today is likely to provide the best conditions for their bid

**THERE** is a full moon over Mooday. That is the day most of the expeditions cloistered in Base Camp are aiming at for their bid for the summit. How much easier a full moon will make the climb from the South Col of Everest when we will be leaving our tents there at midnight, no one really knows.

So far we have had no weather forecast to suggest a May 11 ascent is even possible, but around the expedition camps there is a strong sense of wanting to get on with the job and get out. My team-mate Rob Oweo is not alone in admitting to "summit fever".

The gossip as we walked up after our rest and fattening-up session at Dinboche is that there is still deep snow on the approach to the South Col. Even so, Sherpas have deposited 41 loads at the Col, so in all probability tents and oxygen are in place for summit bids as soon as the weather allows.

The upshot of all this seems to be that once again there will be congestion on the highest



## Everest Diary

**Lobouche**

climb in the world – exactly the circumstances which contributed to the carnage on the mountain in 1996 when 12 people died around 10 and 11 May. With at least 10 expeditions, including three from the United States, Britain (two), Singapore, Iran, Switzerland (two) and various odds and sods – including a lone Dane who has been here since February – there could be up to 70 or 80 climbers and at least as many Sherpas converging on the South Col over a few short days.

Heavy traffic does not necessarily mean fatalities. But things go wrong quickly at such extreme altitudes when crowd-

ing is combined with incompetence or some oversight. In 1996 there were delays at the rock barrier known as the Hillary Step because there was no pre-placed rope. On another occasion, a team arrived at the Step with insufficient jumars - a device used by climbers to haul up ropes - and one jumar had to be repeatedly passed down.

Any idea that expedition leaders might agree to stagger their summit attempts to avoid congestion seems fanciful. The egos of the veteran mountaineers who lead some of the premier expeditions here, notably the Americans, have already clashed about fixing the route up the Hothot Face and the "non-rescue", as it turned out, of a member of a US environmental team who took 13 hours to get from Camp Two (advanced base) to Camp Three on the Face. (Even I only took six hours). Exhausted, he had unclipped from the fixed line and collapsed in the first tent he saw. Unfortunately it was not one of his team's tents and his

comrades didn't look in it before raising the alarm.

So *tension* is rising as we return to Base Camp. This time it's "shut or bust", no more acclimatisation climbs. We just have to wait for the weather and hope a window comes soon. The last time Himalayas Kingdoms Expeditions, our tour organisers, went for the South Col route up Everest seven clients, seven Sherpas and two guides reached the summit. It will be a hard act to follow even in the best of conditions. There are only seven clients, including myself, and if four of us reached the summit I would be pleasantly surprised.

Our three days at Dimboche have cleared the throaty cough I came down the valley with but left me with a snuffy cold. As for my chances on the mountain, I still really don't know. I shall take each stage as it comes. I got up to Camp Three last month and, with a better night's sleep and oxygen, I fancy my chances of reaching the South Col. Beyond that, who knows?



## Papering over the cracks

The Lord Chancellor, Derry Irvine, will visit Washington DC next weekend. His schedule, *arranged with help* from both 10 Downing Street and the Labour Party, calls for an *exhausting round of high-profile events, culminating* with his delivery of the nationally televised National Heritage Lecture at the Supreme Court next Monday. Pandora's sources report that the aim is to enhance Derry's international reputation at a time when his image in Britain remains, *er, colourful*. Among other Washington activities which our highest ranking legal officer will undertake are a private lunch with the Supreme Court justices, speaking to the Oxford-Cambridge Society dinner and a dinner for Glasgow University alumni. Its principal, Sir Graeme Davies, is flying in especially for this. Most unfortunately, however, our own British ambassador, Sir Christopher Meyer, who ordinarily loves a good party, will not be in the US capital to look after Derry. It was Meyer's absence, we're told, that convinced the Lord Chancellor that he would be more at home staying in a Washington hotel. In view of Pandora's previous accounts of this embassy's coolness to Labour Party officials, for once it looks like Derry has made a wise decision about his accommodation.

## Cheap move

**We had always assumed that the *Mirror's* chief rival in the British tabloid market was Rupert Murdoch's *Sun*. But Pandora has to revise such thinking after Saturday.**



It was Murdoch's "upmarket" *Times* which joined with the *Mirror* in splashing a huge photograph of Leonardo DiCaprio's supposed new girlfriend, Vanessa Hayden, left, on their front pages. What a major scoop for the *Thunderer*. But it does make sense when you consider that Saturday's *Times* costs 40p, putting it far closer in price to other tabloids than to any genuine British broadsheet.

## Actions speak louder

Immediately after Diana, Princess of Wales' death, President Clinton said: "We liked her very much. We admired her work." Not enough to join with more than 100 other nations in signing the international treaty outlawing landmines, but then Clinton could always point to his own moratorium on the US use of landmines that became American law in 1966. Now, according to yesterday's *New York Times*, Clinton is urging Congress to reverse its own law. He's under pressure from his joint chiefs of staff, who say that if Iraq invaded Kuwait or Saudi Arabia the ban on mines could deprive American troops of "the means to adequately defend our forces and our allies." Isn't it sad that "friends" of the late Princess such as Clinton cannot be relied on to defend the work they "admired" so much?

## Prayers for the president

More insights on Clinton's perfidious character will soon be available in a new book called *The Unfinished Presidency: Carter's Journey beyond the White House* by Douglas Brinkley. Apparently, at the time of his first inauguration, Clinton snubbed ex-President Jimmy Carter, causing Carter's wife to say that not even Reagan would have treated them so shabbily. The book reveals, however, that in January, shortly after the Monica Lewinsky Zippertage scandal broke, Clinton invited Carter to the White House and asked him "to pray for him in his hour of darkness". Pandora hopes that Carter had the sense not to get down on his knees in this nauseating man's office.

## Honour for Linda

Before her death, Linda McCartney was scheduled to fly to New York to accept the National Ethnic Coalition of Organisations' Medal of Honour next Saturday. Now the leaders of the US group have told the mourning Sir Paul that if he doesn't feel able to attend in her place, they "will fly to England to make the presentation". Pandora has a strong hunch that the ex-Beatle will make the sad journey himself.

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# Euro born under cloud of compromise

Blair seals backroom deal over presidency of central bank but experts fear ferocious row could ruin currency's credibility

By Katherine Butler  
in Brussels

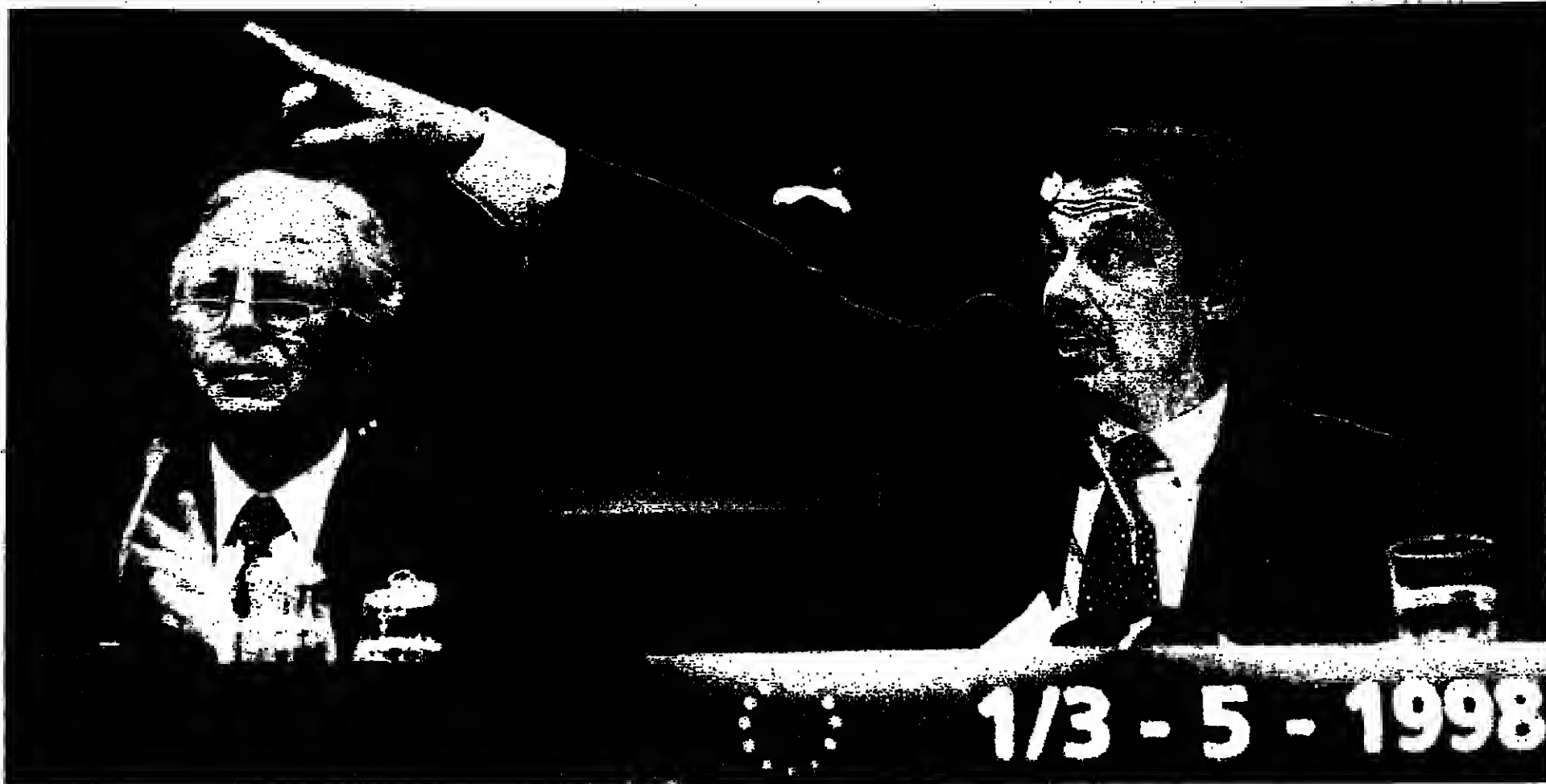
FOR Helmut Kohl, the driving force behind European monetary union, the historic decision at the weekend to merge the currencies of 11 countries into the euro from 1 January next year, should have been a triumph. But Mr Kohl left the European Union Council building early yesterday looking like a broken man, summing up what he had just lived through as "the most difficult hours I have experienced in Europe".

His government almost collapsed during the summit when his finance minister, Theo Waigel, rebelled after Mr Kohl appeared to bow to French pressure to politicise the European Central Bank. Kohl returns home to face elections in which he will be accused of reneging on a promise not to surrender the mighty mark – the potent symbol of Germany's post-war economic miracle – for a weaker money tainted by political interference.

It took 11 tortuous hours to cobble together the shabby backroom deal on who would run the central bank. But the fudged compromise now faces constitutional legal and political challenges which could still mar the euro's launch.

At US Senate-style hearings on Thursday furious MEPs may exercise their right not to confirm the appointment of Wim Duisenberg of the Netherlands to the bank's presidency in protest at the fix which appears to run counter to the terms of the Maastricht Treaty of splitting the ECB president's eight-year term.

The European Parliament President Jose Maria Gil Robles gave a sharp warning yesterday saying the 50-50 job share arrangement between Mr



Point of no return: Tony Blair and Jacques Santer in Brussels yesterday after they had succeeded in thrashing out a deal over the euro and central bank

Photograph: AFP

Duisenberg and Jean Claude Trichet of France is "clearly" in breach of the spirit of the Treaty. It was "no good at all" for the ECB, that it had been boro in such a way he said.

Market economists believe that despite the eleventh-hour deal which Tony Blair insisted had safeguarded the "sanctity" of the Treaty, the ferocity and duration of the day-long row – one of the most bad-tempered summits in the EU's history – has done irreparable damage to the credibility of the institution

which will decide interest rate policy for the Euro countries.

The problems Tony Blair experienced in knocking heads together to deliver the central bank, Europe's first truly federal institution, also reveal the depth of philosophical tensions underlying the whole project.

France and Germany still have profoundly different ideas about how European Monetary Union should be directed. The French fear that a powerful inflation-busting central bank unfettered by political supervision

will squeeze job-creating policies and growth. It now looks as if the French have won the battle to have monetary control balanced by some political input.

What looked ostensibly like a squallid little row over which grey-haired man would pick up a £180,000-a-year job goes to the heart of conceptual differences which, unless they are overcome soon, could tear the EMU project apart.

Nobody imagines that Mr Trichet, who will succeed the German-backed Mr Duis-

enberg at the bank's helm in 2002, will behave like a puppet of the French government. But the perception is what is considered damaging.

Feelings of ill will and bad blood, which augur badly for Europe's future unity, are running high among the EU's smaller countries. They were given a worrying reminder that EMU is a show run by the French and German governments. French President Jacques Chirac's demands were seen as provocative and na-

tionalistic and were described as "out of touch" by the Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern after the summit.

The dispute showed in stark terms how domestic political concerns always come before the collective European good. Neither the French nor the Germans could be seen to lose face in the battle for control over EMU and the Dutch had little room for compromise because their prime minister Wim Kok is facing elections.

But the rancorous feelings

did not stop there. Luxembourg's Jean Claude Juncker, Romano Prodi of Italy, Jean-Luc Dehaene of Belgium and Viktor Klima of Austria – holed up for most of the day in one of the dining rooms on the top floor of EU headquarters – vented their anger at Tony Blair. Mr Prodi said the Prime Minister was "ill prepared" for his role as chairman, while others complained they were left in the dark as private discussions with the Germans and French dragged on for hours.

## Spanish finally clean up toxic sludge

By Elizabeth Nash  
in Madrid

SPAIN'S authorities started clearing 7 million tons of poison sludge spread along 40km of riverbed yesterday, more than a week after a burst reservoir near Seville sent toxic mining waste cascading towards the country's most important nature reserve.

After dithering and mutual accusations, the Environment Ministry, the Andalusian regional government and the Swedish mining company Boliden-Apiras launched a joint operation, each dealing with a section of the Guadamar river, which skirts Coto Doñana national park.

Bulldozers moved to cart off contaminated topsoil and mud impregnated with heavy metals and acidic chemicals. The operation, financed by Boliden, is expected to take a month, after which new topsoil must be laid to enable the land to regenerate. The waste will be dumped in abandoned mine workings in Aznalcollar, near the reservoir that cracked open on 25 April, until a final destination is decided. Locals say the operation must be completed before October, when autumn rains will wash the deadly cocktail deeper into the terrain and aquifers supplying the wetlands of the park.

Volunteers in protective clothing and face masks have cleared away more than 15 tons of dead fish in a desperate attempt to keep the poison from entering the food chain of rare birds and animals inhabiting the protected area. However, dead birds have started to appear already along the riverbanks, and the rotting carcasses of a sheep and a deer, possibly poisoned from drinking toxic waters, were found in marshlands on the outskirts of Doñana. Scientists warn it could take decades for the ecosystem to recover from the disaster.

Exasperated by government shillyshallying, green protesters poured buckets of stinking black water and dead fish down the steps of the Environment Ministry in Madrid on Saturday, calling upon the minister, Isabel Tocino, to resign.

Making his first comment a week after the event, the Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, promised that victims "would not be forgotten".

## US wakes up to threat of potential rival to the dollar

By Mary Dejevsky  
in Washington

FRANCO-GERMAN rivalry and the 11th hour fudge over who should head the European Central Bank provided United States reporters and analysts with a welcome escape route this weekend. They could concentrate on age-old European national discord and how that would hamper plans for a single currency, rather than the more awkward implications for the US if the project succeeds.

"An inauspicious start," said the New York Times correspondent. "... Experience of the EU suggests that

abiding by a single monetary policy will not be easy." "Feud underlines risk, breadth of massive venture," said the Washington Post. On television, America's main source of news, the start of the euro barely registered.

Officials in Washington offered lukewarm congratulations, tempered with mild surprise that the European currency had got even this far. They then returned to more pressing matters – for them – such as today's Middle East peace talks in London, President Bill Clinton's visit to China and new warnings of war in Kosovo.

But the media's preoccupation with Brussels rivalry disguised a con-

siderable turnaround in the US so far as the euro is concerned. Suddenly, those Americans commonly lumped together as "US policy-makers" are waking up to the euro. They are neither as unconcerned nor as pessimistic about its fortunes as the weekend's headlines suggest.

The change is partly the result of a propaganda blitz by Europeans. Leading Washington journalists have recently been taken on "fact-finding" trips to London, Paris and Frankfurt. Last week saw four different euro-events in Washington, with speakers from Britain, the US, Germany, Austria, and the EU Commission among

others: diplomats, businessmen, economists, bankers.

But there has also been a marked shift of official opinion over the past 12 months about whether European countries would accept, let alone qualify for, a common currency. Jeffrey Frankel, of the US Council of Economic Advisors, is perhaps typical. From the adoption of the stability pact, he says, to the lengths so many leaders were prepared to take to popularise fiscal policies in order to meet the membership criteria, he has gradually realised the euro will happen.

Now you can hear analysts from right and left describe the euro as "ar-

guably the biggest thing that's happened to Europe for quite some time". So far there is no American consensus on what the euro could mean.

The Clinton administration and much of the left tends to the benign interpretation that anything which brings Europe together is good for Europe and for the US. According to this view, a single currency will make conflict less likely; it could make consumer goods cheaper across Europe, and also create a bigger, more accessible market for American exporters.

There are, however, less optimistic forecasts. Some argue that the project will simply never come to

fruition and a few predict nationalist backlashes and ultimately new European wars. There are differences, too, on what the euro will mean for the US economy and the dollar. While some economists, like Paul Krugman at Harvard, argue that any effect will be slight and long-term, others believe the euro could be competing with the dollar for the status of leading world reserve currency within three to five years. The development of at least three highly protectionist blocs, trading freely internally – in dollars, euros or yen – but externally defensive, is as likely, say some.

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## DNA test closes book on mystery of Martin Bormann

By Imre Karacs  
in Bonn

THE long search for the elusive Martin Bormann is over. Using DNA analysis, German and Swiss scientists have established that a skeleton dug up in Berlin in 1972 is indeed Bormann's. Hitler's deputy – or, in Goering's words "that filthy swine" – may now rest in peace.

The scientists compared the DNA obtained from a piece of the skull with a tissue sample donated by an 83-year-old relative of Bormann's living near Frankfurt and found matching sequences.

Coupled with eyewitness testimony and dental records, the German authorities are convinced their file on one of the most notorious war criminals can be closed.

Contrary to legend, Hitler's deputy died in all probability on 2 May 1945.

The man spotted in Paraguay, Spain, Italy and Russia in the last five decades must have been an impostor or, more likely, the figment of fiction-writers' imagination.

The Bormann myth began in the dying days of the Third Reich. The Nazi party leader and Hitler's private secretary was entrusted with the Führer's testament and, conceivably, vast sums of money. On 2 May 1945 he left the bunker on a mission to take Hitler's orders to Admiral Karl Dönitz, the Führer's nominated successor. He promptly disappeared.

According to one theory,



"Sightings" of Martin Bormann (left) took investigators to South America and back again. Now scientists have established that his remains were found in 1972

place where the original witness had placed them. One had belonged to an extremely tall man – Stumfegger – while the other matched Bormann's features.

Since then the remains have been in the possession of prosecutors in Frankfurt awaiting yesterday's final proof. "It is painful for us," wrote Martin Bormann, the 68-year old son of the mass murderer, "that nothing has been known for certain about our father since 2 May 1945."

Mr Bormann, a priest who never misses an opportunity to speak out about his father's crimes, now plans a secret funeral. So as not to create a Nazi shrine, the remains are expected to be cremated and scattered in the wilderness, possibly at sea.

Bormann apparitions flooded in from every corner of the globe, forcing German investigators on a wild-goose chase from Patagonia to the Amazon jungle, and back to southern Europe. More than 6,000 sightings have been reported; dozens of aliases had to be checked out.

The Germans had to dig again. In 1972, a derelict site near the Reichstag revealed the two skeletons close to the

he managed to escape from Berlin and was smuggled to South America on board a U-boat. Over the years, there have been persistent sightings in Paraguay and Brazil.

The official version accepted Bormann as dead, though the Allies took the precaution of sentencing him to death in absentia in Nuremberg.

One leading Nazi testified seeing him outside the bunker on 2 May, in the company of Hitler's doctor, Ludwig Stumfegger. Bormann and Stumfegger came across Soviet troops as they were fleeing, and took their lives by swallowing cyanide capsules.

The testimony had one weakness. In 1965 the West Berlin authorities dug up the ground at the spot where the two bodies were allegedly lying and found nothing. The powerful Bormann myth, nurtured by neo-Nazis, was rekindled.

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Sorry state: Leader of  
Doncaster council  
Glover apologising for  
Donnygate scandal  
could damage Labour  
Thursday

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PM's  
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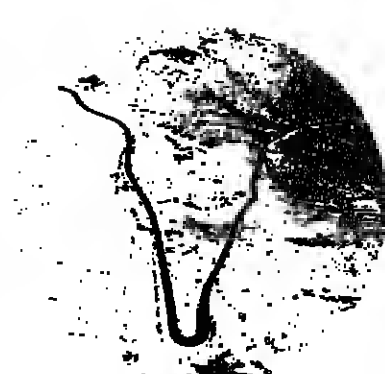
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# US plays down Blair's Mid-east peace initiative

By Patrick Cockburn  
in Jerusalem

BENJAMIN Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, meet in London today with Madeline Albright, the United States Secretary of State, to discuss separately the breaking of the impasse in the Middle East peace talks.

The meetings, agreed at the time of Tony Blair's visit to Israel last month, take place amid predictions from all sides that no progress is to be expected. Indeed, Israel and the United States have devoted such efforts to lowering expectations that it is surprising the talks are taking place at all. James Rubin, the US State Department spokesman, said: "There is no reason to believe we are in a position to bridge the gaps."

David Bar-Ilan, a senior aide of Mr Netanyahu, said it was "utterly impossible" for Israel to accept the 13.1 per cent withdrawal from the West Bank proposed by the US because it would compromise Israel's security. Israel is offering about 9 per cent. Mr Arafat, stressing his disappointment, has accepted the American figure.

The argument over the exact proportion of the West Bank to be ceded by Israel

masks the assumption among most observers that the Israeli leader is playing for time and does not want to implement the Oslo accords of 1993 with their "peace for land" formula. Mr Netanyahu has so far calculated successfully that President Bill Clinton does not want a confrontation with Israel.

"I think the administration knows our position," said Mr Bar-Ilan. "It would be utterly impossible for Israel to adhere to a withdrawal of 13 per cent." Mr Arafat said progress "depends on Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu because it is there the problem is and nowhere else".

The Palestinian leader's acceptance of the US position is largely based on the assumption that Israel will reject it.

Mr Netanyahu, who flew to London yesterday, was expected to make a courtesy call on Mr Blair before meeting Ms Albright. But there are no plans for a tripartite meeting between the Secretary of State, the Israeli Prime Minister and Mr Arafat. Nor are there signs that the US is exerting pressure on Israel. Earlier in the month, 81 US Senators sent a letter to President Clinton asking him not to make public American proposals to end the stalemate in the peace process.

Mr Arafat is in a weak po-

sition. He depends entirely on a diplomatic strategy of trying to win support from the US, West Europeans and the Arab states. But Mr Netanyahu is confident he can withstand this. The Palestinian leader has no alternative to his present stance, and there is little appetite for renewed confrontation with Israel among Palestinians on the West Bank.

The only words of optimism about the London meeting came from US Vice President Al Gore, visiting Israel on the 50th anniversary of its independence. "We believe London offers an occasion for great progress. We hope and pray that progress will occur," he said.



Gun protest: Demi Gonzalez, four, among thousands of empty shoes owned by, or representing, the dead victims of gun-related violence in the US, during a protest near the headquarters of the firearms company Smith & Wesson in Springfield, Massachusetts  
Photograph: Reuters

## UN chief 'knew Rwanda genocide was on the way'

By David Usborne  
in New York

KOFI ANNAN, the Secretary General of the United Nations, knew weeks in advance about plans for the genocide of the minority Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994 but told UN military personnel in the country not to take any action, according to a press report to be published here today.

The article, in the *New Yorker*, alleges that the head of the UN forces in Rwanda, General Romeo Dallaire, sent a message to the office of Mr Annan, then in charge of UN peace-keeping operations, on 11 January 1994 warning of the impending massacre. The General cited a Rwandan security official saying he had been ordered to prepare for the "extermination" of the Tutsis.

The genocide campaign, which left at least 500,000 Tutsis dead in Rwanda, began on 6 April 1994 and lasted for three months, uninterrupted by outside intervention.

There was no reaction to the claim yesterday from Mr Annan who was in Kenya on a 10-day

tour of Africa. Mr Annan, from Ghana, became head of the UN at the beginning of 1997.

The timing of the accusation could hardly be more awkward as he is due in Rwanda itself later this week.

According to the report, by journalist Philip Gourevitch, Gen Dallaire was ordered not to intervene and to turn over what he had been told by the informant to the Hutu government of the late President Juvenal Habyarimana.

Iqbal Riza, who was in Mr Annan's office then and now serves as his chief advisor, told the *New Yorker* that any notion of UN intervention at that time would have been unrealistic. One reason was that only four months before, 18 American soldiers had been killed on a UN mission in Somalia.

Mr Riza said that he had himself sent the reply back to Gen Dallaire. "I was responsible," he said. Mr Riza went on, however, to add: "This is not to say Mr Annan was oblivious of what was going on. No. Part of my responsibility was to keep him informed."

### Serb police wounded as Kosovo fighting worsens

FIVE Serbian policemen were wounded in a battle with Albanian separatists who attacked the border village of Ponoševac in south-west Kosovo yesterday. The clash was monitored from across the nearby border in neighbouring Albania by observers from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Intermittent mortar and heavy machine-gun fire continued for a third straight day in the vicinity of Vojnik, inside the traditional rebel stronghold of Drenica, 25 miles west of Pristina. Three ethnic Albanians were killed and three wounded in Vojnik on Saturday.

— Reuters, Ponoševac, Serbia

### Sudan foes talk peace

TALKS aimed at resolving Sudan's civil war restart today against the backdrop of a threatened famine in south Sudan related to the 15-year war. Thousands could die in Bahr el Ghazal region, where international aid has been hampered by fighting between the Khartoum government and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army, aid agencies say. The Nairobi talks, which ended inconclusively last November, are resuming under the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, a seven-nation grouping of regional states. Delegations from the Sudan government and the SPLA arrived in Nairobi yesterday.

— Reuters, Nairobi

### Corot landscape stolen

POLICE closed the Louvre and conducted body searches of visitors after a guard discovered the theft of a landscape by Corot. The guard discovered the painting, *The Stives Road*, missing yesterday afternoon. He alerted police and the museum was shut. The thief apparently had cut the painting from its frame before sneaking away.

— AP, Paris

# TURNED OUT



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# Malaysia to make rain as Games face ruin

By Richard Lloyd Parry  
in Kuala Lumpur

MALAYSIA is preparing to send aircraft to seed clouds and "clean" the air over Kuala Lumpur to dispel concern that water shortages and smog will disrupt September's Commonwealth Games.

According to reports over the weekend, British marathon runners intend to boycott the games if the Malaysian capital continues to suffer from the smoky "haze", caused by vast forest fires in Borneo, which has afflicted it for much of the last year.

But senior organisers appear to be at odds over what they will do if the smoke fails to clear. Only a week ago, the sports minister, Muhyiddin Yassin, insisted the Games would be held in Kuala Lumpur "come

rain or shine", and angrily denied rumours they might be moved to Australia. But yesterday he admitted some events might have to be moved out of Kuala Lumpur to other Malaysian cities, only to be contradicted moments later by the games' chief organiser.

"It is reasonable at the moment to look at contingency plans," said Mr Muhyiddin. "There will be a cost in moving events from Kuala Lumpur... [but] we are as concerned as you that any environment should not be bad for the health."

But the head of the organising body, Hashim Mohamad Ali, denied this. "We're not talking about any change of venues," said Mr Hashim, who offered his resignation last year after allegations of financial profligacy among Malaysian sports officials.

"The event will take place at the actual venue we have assigned to that particular sport. Full stop."

Malaysians are hoping fervently that the haze, which has caused health problems and transportation accidents throughout South-east Asia, will have abated by September, but at the moment it is a daily feature of life in Kuala Lumpur. Schools and airports in different parts of Malaysia have been intermittently forced to close over the last two months.

Yesterday, the city's famous Petronas Twin Towers, the world's tallest buildings, were almost invisible just a few miles from the city centre, although the situation was much worse last September when a state of emergency was declared in the province of Sarawak.

The location of the fires in

the jungles of Borneo in neighbouring Indonesia makes them extremely difficult to extinguish. The Asian economic crisis, of which Indonesia is the most serious casualty, has made the job of tackling the fires a low priority for the government in Jakarta.

Yesterday the Malaysian prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, announced a range of measures designed to counteract the smoke, including the technique of "cloud-seeding", whereby salt solution is dropped by aircraft directly on to clouds to release rain.

"We are also making artificial rain and we are sucking up the air in order to clean it," Dr Mahathir said.

"We are quite sure we can reduce the amount of haze to a level that makes it possible for athletes to run and walk."



Unhealthy atmosphere: The smoky haze currently shrouding Malaysia's capital Kuala Lumpur

Photograph: Reuters

## Zimbabwe tells Mugabe to quit

President under pressure from own party, writes Mary Braid in Harare

"MUGABE you're now irrelevant. Go and rest old man." Six months ago, only the insane would have brandished such a slogan in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare. But as a demonstration by thousands of students in the capital last week showed, the unthinkable is becoming commonplace.

The resignation of President Robert Mugabe, 73, was top of the list of demands of the protesters, angry at the police shooting of a student at an earlier demonstration. Those who chanted "Mugabe Out" also demanded the return of Dzikamayai Mavhaire, a member of the ruling Zanu-PF party recently suspended for daring to utter in parliament the message from the street.

In a debate on constitutional reform of the one-party state, Mr Mavhaire forgot the need for diplomacy, and while arguing that the constitution must be altered to prevent a president serving more than two terms, said: "Mugabe must go." There were gasps in the chamber. It was another landmark in Zimbabwe's slow revolution.

In spite of unprecedented demonstrations, riots and strikes, Mr Mugabe still believes the country which once adored him for seeing off white settlers can be jolted along with a few revolutionary songs and a Mugabe T-shirt. But he cannot ignore the thirst for change. Mr Mavhaire's outburst confirmed that rebellion against him is spreading even in the ranks of his own party.

A growing number of party members privately admit Mr Mugabe is now a liability. Even the parliament, where the dice is loaded to ensure Zanu holds 147 of the 150 seats, has ceased to behave like a rubber stamp.

"He is besieged from without, and more significantly now from within," says Iden Wetherell, assistant editor of the *Zimbabwe Independent*, one of the few independent voices in a largely state controlled media. "The most significant feature of recent months has been the deadly silence of Mugabe's senior ministers. They are watching, waiting and rubbing their hands."

Hence Mr Mugabe's delay in announcing a reshuffle of his 56-strong cabinet - the lodestone of the complex, and corrupt system of patronage constructed over Mr Mugabe's 18-year rule. During that time the constitution has been adjusted to concentrate more power in the president's hands.

Mr Mugabe's stranglehold owes something to the Zimbabweans' patience. But in December last year that patience started dissolving as the Zim-

babwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) staged its first ever national strike in protest at the government's economic failures. Riots over rocketing food prices followed.

Responsibility for the crisis is generally laid at Mr Mugabe's door, despite his attempts to blame the country's affluent white minority.

Not everyone is gloomy about the looming upheaval. "People think the country is collapsing," says David Chimhini, director of the human rights organisation ZimRights, "but the disintegration of the ruling party is an advantage in the building of Zimbabwe's nascent civil society". Human rights groups, trade unions, churches and brave individuals like Margaret Dongo, the only true opposition voice in parliament, are



Mugabe: Cannot ignore the thirst for change

dedicated to the development of civic institutions.

While Ms Dongo braves petrol bomb attacks to lay the foundations of a movement which might become an opposition party, ZCTU secretary general Morgan Tsvangirai is now the reluctant leader of mass resistance.

At union headquarters a security guard mans a newly installed iron entrance gate. Blood stains on the carpet in Mr Tsvangirai's office confirm that opposition in Zimbabwe is not for the faint-hearted. After the general strike, Mr Tsvangirai was beaten unconscious and left for dead by veterans of the war against the old white regime.

It was the veterans' demands that the government honour pension promises - after millions of dollars were plundered from the state veterans' fund - which caused the government to raise taxes and precipitated the general strike. Mr Tsvangirai's criticisms of Mr Mugabe's capitulation to their demands brought the combatants to his door: he believes the government was behind the attack.

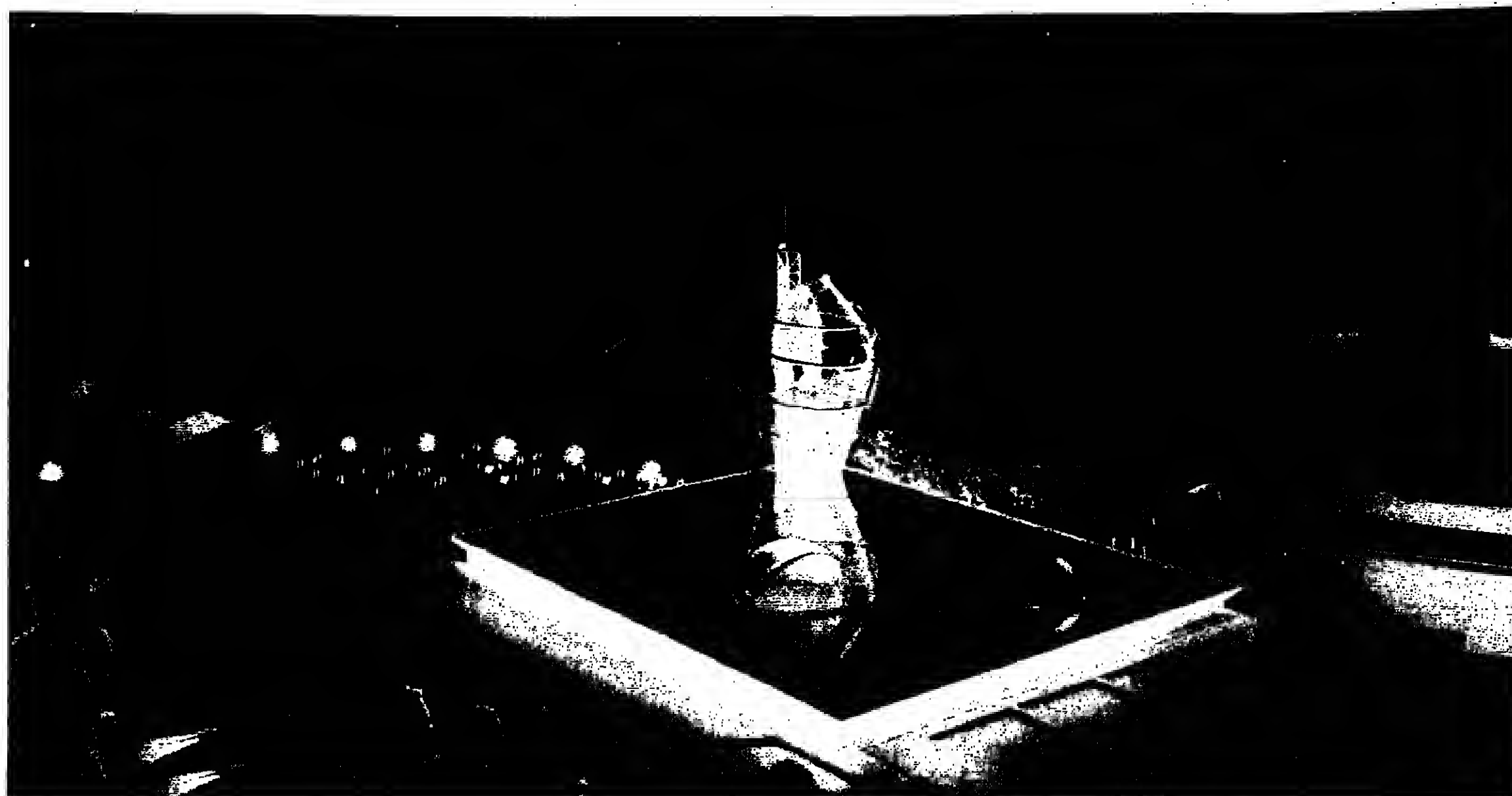
The fear is that unless the system, as well as the president, changes, a deposed Mugabe might just be replaced by a Zanu clone.

Welcome to Marlboro Country.

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Lift off: The National Space Science Centre (left) in Leicester will have the first Challenger Learning Centre outside North America

# A different kind of experience

The Dome won't be the only place to celebrate the millennium, a range of science visitor centres are also planned for the occasion. Hugh Aldersey-Williams reports

INTERESTED in science? Then forget the Dome. More than £600m – only a little less than the price tag for the Millennium Dome at Greenwich – is to be spent on science and technology visitor centres for the millennium. Of that, £270m comes from the Millennium Commission, while the rest is made up from matching funds from Europe, local councils and commercial sponsors. In all, it is nearly twice as much as the annual amount awarded by the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council, the largest research funding body.

The question is, will it be money well spent? Certainly, this big push will enable Britain to catch up with countries that have traditionally done better at presenting contemporary science to the public.

At Leicester, for example, the National Space Science Centre will incorporate the first "Challenger Learning Centre" outside North America. The centres, developed with backing from US space agency Nasa, enable children to develop their maths and science knowledge by playing at astronautics. The International Centre for Life in Newcastle will feature "superlabs", where real researchers will teach some experiments too advanced for schools to undertake – an idea borrowed from the outreach programme of the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island, New York.

Birmingham's Millennium Point – at £112m the grandest of the projects – with a discovery centre and a technology innovation centre, looks to France's Futuroscope, which already advertises its attractions in British Sunday newspapers. Like many of the projects, it will exploit existing academic strengths. Ian Forrester, project manager for X-Site, Glasgow's planned national science centre, speaks for many of the projects when he says: "Most

other countries have science centres. Glasgow doesn't, but it does have world-leading universities."

Fourteen projects around the country are supported by the Millennium Commission covering a range of sciences, from astronomy to geology to biology. Like Millennium Point, most of the centres also focus on technology or innovation, and some have an element of local heritage to show their relevance to potential visitors.

Many of the schemes are experiencing the same agonies as the Millennium Dome – for example, whether their purpose should be primarily to educate or to entertain. Most of the larger centres will have "white-knuckle rides" which, while of limited scientific merit, are seen as essential to draw visitors. "To market science you can't present it pure," says Forrester. "The clever

bit is between getting you drawn in and getting you to understand. You have to excite and enthuse before you can engage."

Some may never get that far. Those responsible for Island 2000, the Isle of Wight's proposal for a pterodactyl-shaped dinosaur museum and improvements to nearby botanical gardens, were too disorganised to return my calls. The £91m National Discovery Park in Liverpool has no literature for distribution. Magna, a steel heritage centre in Rotterdam, themed somewhat misleadingly around the four ancient "elements" (earth, air, fire and water), is already being scaled down after consultants calculated that its exhibits could not be afforded.

The Weather Watch Centre in Bracknell, a town council initiative with the nearby Meteorological Office, has not raised

the bulk of its matching funds, and has been denied permission to miss certain "milestone" dates for progress on the project set down by the Millennium Commission. Meanwhile, the town council member whose idea it was has departed. "If the Millennium Commission doesn't support this, we may, together with the Met Office, redo it in networked form, using government money to bring it into schools," says borough engineer Chas Davison, into whose lap the project has fallen.

But at least a handful of the new centres will undoubtedly be spectacularly successful. The most original and authoritative must surely be Newcastle's International Centre for Life. Its trust chairman, science author Matt Ridley, has assembled a pantheon of science communicators as advisors, including Richard Dawkins, Susan

Greenfield, Steve Jones and James Watson, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA.

Unlike physical sciences and technology, which rely largely on past glories for their appeal, many of the breakthroughs and most of the applications yet to come are in genetics and molecular biology. This is one field which does not have to labour to spell out its relevance: it is about us. "The driver is an intuition that this is a science where the public are going to get much more involved than ever before," says chief executive Alastair Balls. Accordingly, the International Centre for Life incorporates its visitor centre – the Helix – and a genetics institute for fundamental research in the same building.

Such synergy with local academia features in a number of schemes: The Deep makes use of the University of Hull's work in environmental modelling; the Dundee

Science Centre benefits from the city university's leadership in cancer research. The public witnesses authentic science as it happens, for example with on-line links to remote telescopes at Leicester.

But what's in it for the academic institutions? Professor Alan Wells hopes to see an increased recruitment to Leicester University's undergraduate course in space science, which already bucks the nationwide trend of falling numbers of students taking physics. Others hope that bringing their researchers into direct contact with the public will build bridges. "A lot of people have an interest in following the groove we've started to make. The drugs companies need to take the public with them; food companies and insurance companies, too," says Balls.

A critical perspective is a conscious feature of several leading projects. Birmingham plans a theatre for debating issues in science. Glasgow's X-Site is "trying to create a neutral view of science, with core themes of creativity, exploration, and the social setting of science", according to science exhibitions manager Dr Graham Durant. At the International Centre for Life, a visitor area called Choices will pose ethical questions, register visitors' views and display the changing consensus, showing that "this is not a static subject with static opinions", says Balls.

"The decisions will not just be for science and government, but practical decisions for ordinary people on the street," he adds. "To what extent do people want to involve themselves in genetic enhancement of any sort? If we can change the species, it is important everyone is involved and can make rational decisions, and we don't just play King Canute with this new knowledge. A Disney-like visitor attraction would be morally-mouthed."

## THOSE MILLENNIUM SCIENCE CENTRES IN FULL

Name	Topic	Location	Aiming to open	Millennium and matching funds	Web site (prefix http://)
Millennium Point	Science and technology	Birmingham	Autumn 2001	£50m + £61.6m	www.birmingham.gov.uk/millennium
Bristol 2000	Science	Bristol	Spring 2000	£41.3m + £54.7m	www.exploratory.org.uk/bfbs2000
X-Site National Science Centre	Science and technology	Glasgow	Autumn 2000	£35m + £74.5m	
International Centre for Life	Genetics	Newcastle	Easter 2000	£27m + £27m	www.life-science.co.uk
National Discovery Park	Media technology	Liverpool	Unknown	£27m + £64.4m	
National Space Science Centre	Space exploration and astronomy	Leicester	February 2001	£23.2m + £23.2m	xsmac14.star.le.ac.uk
Magna	Steel industry heritage	Rotherham	Easter 2000	£18.6m + £32.1m	
The Deep	Ocean sciences	Kingston upon Hull	April 2001	£18.5m + £18.5m	
The Dynamic Earth	Earth sciences	Edinburgh	Spring 1999	£15.1m + £18.4m	www.ebs.hw.ac.uk/DynamicEarth
The Big Idea	Invention	Ayrshire	Spring 2000	£5.3m + £5.3m	www.bigidea.org.uk
Initech 2000	Technology	Winchester	31 December 1999	£4.8m + £4.8m	
Island 2000	Botany and palaeontology	Isle of Wight	No information provided	£2.2m + £2.2m	
Dundee Science Centre	Life sciences	Dundee	During 2000	£1.6m + £1.6m	
Weather Watch Discovery Centre	Meteorology	Bracknell	Unknown	£1.5m + £2.1m	

## TECHNOQUEST

### Nerve signals/ naming satellites/ red noses/ waking sleepwalkers/ ants' vision/ freckles

Questions for this column may be submitted via e-mail to sci.net@campus.bt.com

**Q How does a nerve signal pass between cells?**  
When the nerve signal (in the form of an electrochemical "potential" between the inside and outside of the nerve) reaches the end of an axon, it is passed on to the next nerve cell, or on to an effector cell, such as a muscle. The axon of one neurone doesn't usually make direct contact with the cell body of the next: the two cells are separated by a gap called a synapse. Information is transmitted across the synapse using chemicals called neurotransmitters, which cause electrical changes in the membrane of the next cell. The signal then passes along to the next nerve cell in the network.

**Q How did Uranus's satellites get their strange names?**  
In 1787 William Herschel

thought he had discovered several Uranian satellites (though only two were later confirmed). In accordance with the custom of the time, he only gave them numbers. In 1851 William Lassell discovered two more. Because of the confusion over Herschel's unconfirmed satellites, Lassell consulted Herschel's son John and decided to the confirmed satellites proper names. John Herschel wrote: "Proceeding from without, inward in succession, the names Oberon, Titania, Umbriel and Ariel, of the fairies, sylphs and gnomes of Shakespeare and Pope have been assigned respectively". The subsequent Uranian satellite discoveries (Miranda by Gerald Krüper in 1948 and the 10 satellites discovered by the Voyager 2 spacecraft in 1986) have been named from the same sources.

**Q Why does your nose go red when you are cold?**  
Cold causes your veins to shrink to cut down on the amount of blood near the skin (and so heat loss), which makes you look pale. But your nose helps to warm and humidify the air that you breathe, and needs a good blood supply to work properly. So, the veins in your nose are adapted not to shrink in the cold, making your nose much redder than the rest of your face in low temperatures.

**Q Why is it dangerous to wake a sleepwalker?**  
When we sleep we go through different phases. Sleepwalking occurs in the "slow wave" part of sleep during which our bodies use little oxygen and have basically shut down. During this form of sleep the body cannot cope as well as usual with shock, so any sudden changes

– such as being abruptly wakened – can be dangerous for people with heart problems.

**Q How far can ants see?**  
There is no simple answer to this question. Some worker ants have well-developed eyes and can leap from branch to branch. Others have greatly reduced vision and some have no eyes at all.

**Q What's the technical name for a freckle?**  
A freckle is called a lentigo. Freckles are caused by certain cells producing too much melanin – the chemical that gives our bodies colour.

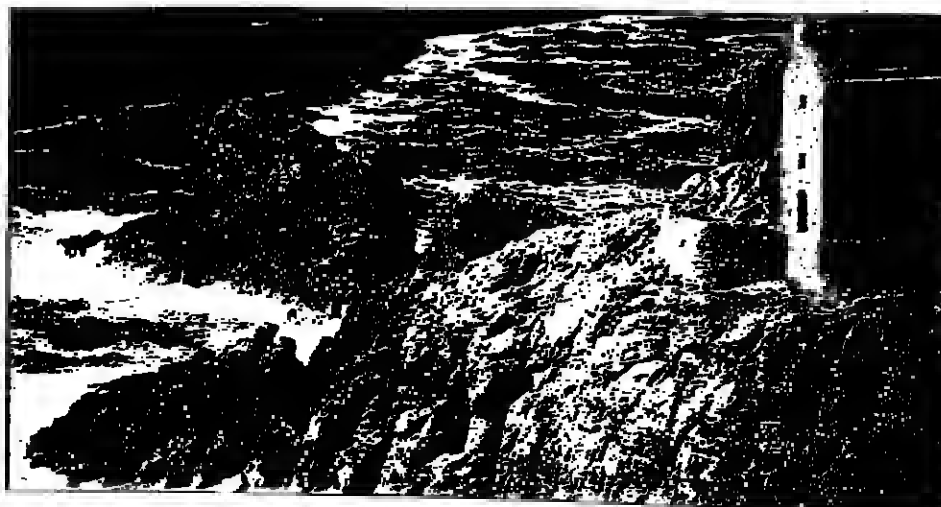
You can also visit the technoquest World Wide Web site at <http://www.science.net.org.uk>. Questions and answers provided by Science Line's Dial-a-Scientist on 0345 600444.

## TELL ME ABOUT Radon...

RADON is a colourless, odourless, naturally occurring gas which just happens to be radioactive. It is produced from the decay of a number of chemicals – uranium-238 (which breaks down to produce radium-226, which then decays into radon-222, with a half-life of four days) and thorium, for example.

The trouble with radon is that it can actually make some houses dangerous to live in. Uranium occurs in rocks such as granite, meaning that in places such as Cornwall there is a constant seepage from the ground of the gas. With the trend for modern homes to be snug and draughtproof, that can actually lead to the gas filtering through the foundations and collecting inside – which, without ventilation, can pose a small but real health risk. (You can get rid of radon either by installing a sheet of material under the house to stop the radon getting through, or by installing fans to blow it away.)

If you live in Cornwall, the statistical risk of dying from radon exposure is about 1 in 3,300, though actual cases are difficult to pin down. Certain parts of the county are more hazardous than others, which is



Natural forces: In Cornwall (above), radon constantly seeps out of the ground

why the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) has been conducting a wide-ranging survey, spanning the UK, to see whether there is a raised risk from radon exposure.

Why is radon dangerous? When radon-222 decays, it emits an alpha-particle (a high-energy proton), and continues to decay through a series of solid radioactive nuclides until it reaches the stable, non-radioactive lead-206. Though alpha

particles cannot penetrate skin, if emitted inside the body they can eventually cause cancer by damaging DNA. The risk posed by radon is that an atom will lodge in your lung and emit an alpha-particle.

Is that it? Not quite. Earlier this year Bernard Cohen, a radiation physicist at the University of Pittsburgh, who has completed the biggest-ever study into radon – drawing on data from almost half a million

homes in the US – suggested that below a certain level of exposure the risk of contracting lung cancer from radon is zero. Others disagree. But if Cohen is correct, it would be a radical finding since it would go against our thinking on how alpha particles, DNA and cancer are intertwined. It might even help property prices in Cornwall.

Charles Arthur, Science and Technology Editor

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# Hail to the Chief



DEBORAH ROSS  
TALKS TO RABBI  
JONATHAN SACKS

SO, to St John's Wood in north London, to meet Dr Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi. The Chief Rabbi? Yes, I stopped going to synagogue a long time ago. ("I don't want no, syna-go-go." I used to protest to my father until eventually he gave in.) But, still, I'm very excited. My mother is even more excited. My mother had spent much of the previous day calling me with instructions that ranged from "wear a DRESS" through to a less certain "do you even have a DRESS?" and finally culminating in: "I'm off to BRENT CROSS, to get you a DRESS!"

So, in a stupid dress (from Next, I think) and lights and lipstick and everything you're meant to wear when you come from Golders Green, as I do, and are about to meet The Chief Rabbi, I arrive at his official residence. Malcolm, his skull-capped, personal bodyguard answers the door. Malcolm says: "The Chief's just on the phone." And: "The Chief will be down in a minute." I love the way Malcolm says "Chief." He says it like Dennis Waterman used to say "Guv" to John Thaw in *The Sweeney*. When The Chief eventually comes down, I tell him if that if anyone ever decides to make an orthodox Jewish version of *The Sweeney*, then he and Malcolm would be top of the casting list, no question. I doubt they'd even need to audition.

The Chief laughs politely, but blinks rather blankly. I don't think The Chief has ever watched *The Sweeney*. Later, he confesses he doesn't really watch telly at all, although he likes the odd film. *The Shawshank Redemption* was pretty good, he says - "a wonderful film about hope." He wasn't too sure about *Schindler's List*. "I wrote to Stephen Spielberg afterwards to say you've made a magnificent film about how Jews died, now how about one about how Jews lived? Then, a couple of months ago, I had a wonderful treat. One of his partners at Dreamworks phoned to tell me they were doing a film about the Exodus, with special effects and everything." The Chief looks well pleased.

We go into the living room. There are framed photographs of his wife, Elaine, and their three children - Joshua, Dina and Gila - everywhere, of course. Plus bookcase upon bookcase of books. Hebrew on one side, English on the other. He has all the classics. Byron, Austen, Thackeray, Shakespeare, the complete works of Dickens, but it would be wrong to assume he was of the stuffy, "no decent novels have been written for a 100 years" brigade. As he says: "When I'm depressed, I like John Le Carré. *The Honourable Schoolboy*. Now, there's a good book." Dr Sacks has a very kindly, slow, patient, soothing voice, the sort of voice you'd like to melt into and never come out of. He has a wonderful face, too. He looks rather like Peter Sellers trying to be Topol.

Although Dr Sacks is, technically, only leader of the United Synagogues in this country - the main Orthodox grouping which represents mainstream orthodoxy - he is also widely regarded as the public face of all Anglo-Jewry, which includes the ultra-Orthodox (with their long black coats

and dangly bits of hair) to the right, and the Reform (who are much more relaxed about observance) to the left. As such - and to keep the community together - Dr Sacks has had to walk a kind of quivering tightrope between the two. He isn't always successful.

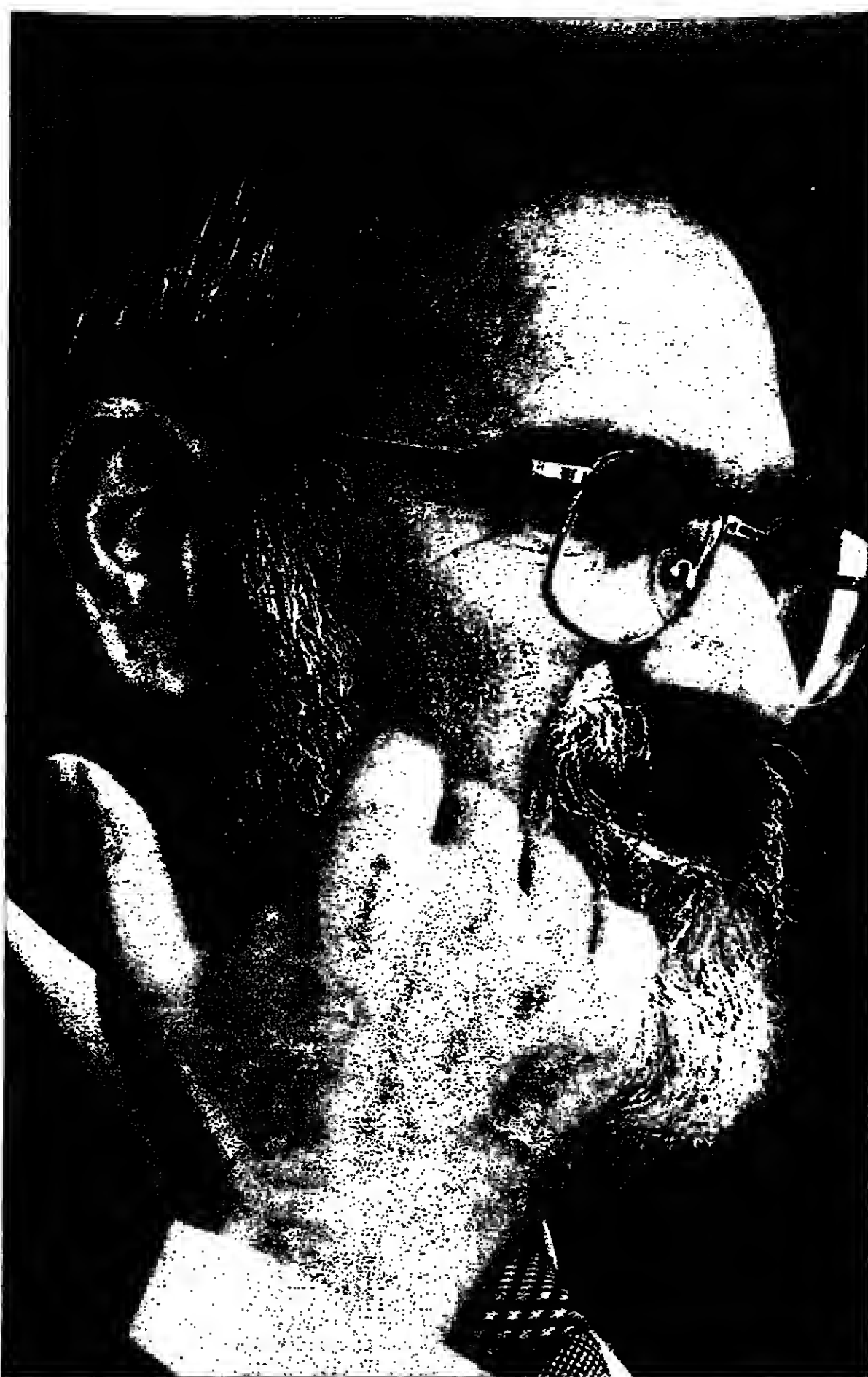
When Rabbi Hugo Gryn - head of the Reform Movement and popular broadcaster - died last year, Dr Sacks didn't go to his funeral, for fear of offending the ultra-Orthodox. Instead, the Reform were offended. So, to placate them, he did go to Gryn's memorial service, where he gave a most moving speech. However, in so doing, he offended the ultra-Orthodox. He subsequently wrote a letter to an ultra-Orthodox rabbi, in which he spoke of his hostility to "the various kinds of Reform Jew" and described the conflicts he suffered "in praising a person who was amongst those who destroy the faith". The letter was leaked to the *Jewish Chronicle*. All hell let loose. Chief, do you feel terribly torn apart? "I did for a period of about a year. Now, I understand that I should no longer try to reconcile the two extremes. In the end, I have to speak with my own voice, expounding the tradition as I see it." Chief Rabbi? Nice job if you can get it? Perhaps not.

The size of the Jewish community in Britain has fallen from 450,000 in the early 1960s to barely 300,000 today. These days, there are only around 1000 synagogue weddings a year. ("If so, how come I seem to be invited to all of them," cries my brother). Still, the falling numbers reflect, probably, the increasing number of Jews like me. Jews who, in effect, do nothing to keep Judaism going. Jews who stopped going to *shul* because it was too cold and boring, except on Yom Kippur, when you could keep a tally of how many old ladies fainted, and things livened up a bit. Jews who eat bacon. Jews who send Christmas cards (albeit with pictures of robins rather than baby Jesus on them). No, I haven't married out, but only because I haven't married. Still I've slept out with great enjoyment over the years and have a son who probably won't think of himself as Jewish to prove it. How do you feel, Chief? Disappointed? Angry? Sad? Betrayed? Resigned? Sickened? He says, perhaps predictably: "How do you feel about it?" (Moishe to Hymie: "Hymie, why do you always answer a question with a question?" Hymie: "Why shouldn't I?")

I say I'm not sure. I say I find it confusing. On the one hand, I know I'm Jewish. But, on the other hand, what right do I have to say so, when I no longer observe any of the rituals, and don't even especially believe in a God. He says: "Let me tell you a story in parenthesis here." (Let me tell you, in parenthesis, that if you ever want a direct answer to a question, ask a Gentile).

"I was fascinated by Isaiah Berlin, who claimed to be a secular Jew. He used to say to me 'Chief Rabbi, don't talk to me about religion. When it comes to God I'm tone deaf'. Yet he requested that I officiate at his funeral. Now why did Isaiah, a secular Jew, want me to officiate? To me, it suggests we may be using the word 'secular' too loosely."

I say I accept all this. I, too, have a sense of where I have come from. I would like to go back there when I die, albeit in something other than this silly dress and glutinous lipstick. But, without the religious dimension - without living it in some way every day - is it actually enough? Probably not, he says. There is a cultural aspect to Judaism - the sense of a shared history, a shared suffering, this knowledge that you belong to a certain people. "But to be a Jew and understand Judaism is, ultimately, a religious phenomenon. I doubt personally whether in the diaspora secular Jewish identity can survive. The only place it can survive is in Israel, where the landscape, the language - where everything reinforces Jewish identity. Judaism is a religious faith, not just an ethnic group."



Dr Jonathan Sacks: 'Israel is not just the Promised Land - it's the over-promised land' Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

So, what does all this make me, then? "A human being. Right?" And to be human is more important to be Jewish? "Not all contradictions can be resolved," he says, which isn't really an answer, but seems to be as far as he will go. I do make him sad, I think.

Dr Sacks, now 50, was brought up mainly in Finchley, north London, although he spent his early years in the East End. His father, Louis, had come from Poland when he was two. His father had a formidable intellect, plus great taste in the arts - "he liked Mahler before anyone else had even heard of Mahler" - but, in order to support his family, had left school at 14 to sell cloth in a shop in the Commercial Road. His father was an observant Jew, yet he didn't know much about Judaism. "I remember, when I was five, walking back from synagogue with him, and asking him lots of questions. My father said 'I didn't have an education, therefore I don't have the answers to your questions. One day, you will have the education. I didn't have and you will teach me the answers'. Now, what greater gift can you give a child?" I think this is a rhetorical question. I don't think he expects me to say: "A Nintendo, possibly."

He studied philosophy at Cambridge, and took a double first, as did his three younger brothers. "We did it to give our father pride." His interest in becoming a rabbi had its beginnings at the outbreak of the Six Day War, while he was still an undergraduate. "It had a huge impact on me. Every Jew I knew felt completely involved. For me, it raised the question: 'What made me feel so connected to these people 7,000 miles away? What bound us together? What does it mean to be a Jew?' What does it mean to be a Jew? 'It's the belief that behind the world is another world, that this world is underpinned by a divine presence which constitutes the very heart

of reality. And to live that out in terms of Jewish law."

What if one of your children were to come home and announce they were marrying a non-Jew? "It would represent a real crisis for me and my wife. We have tried to show them what it is to have a Jewish home. One of the great difficulties of Judaism is, I think, this business of where being a protector of the faith transmits into a kind of bigotry. Sometimes, I just don't get God, if at all."

Certainly, I do wonder about someone like Dr Sacks and God. I do wonder how someone so obviously intellectual - a Professor of Philosophy, even, before being appointed Chief Rabbi seven years ago - can believe. He says Isaiah Berlin used to have the same problem. "He used to say to me, 'what I can't understand is how you, having studied philosophy at Cambridge, can be a believer?' I said, if it makes it easier for you, just think of me as a lapsed heretic. He said yes, he could relate to that."

Seriously, how can you believe in a God when something like the Holocaust has been allowed to happen? Or, as Primo Levi once put it: "You can have God. And you can have Auschwitz. But you can't have both." Dr Sacks says: "Did Primo Levi say that? I am quite familiar with his works, and I don't recall it." Okay, maybe it was Danielle Steele but, still, I would like to hear your response to it.

"My view is this. The real question isn't where was God in Auschwitz, but where was man at Auschwitz? God was there in the command 'Thou shalt not murder'. God was there in the command 'Thou shalt not oppress a stranger'. God was at Auschwitz in the words 'Thy brothers' blood cries to me from the ground'. At Auschwitz, God spoke, and humanity didn't listen. So, to repeat, I ask not where was God, but where was man?"

"God gave humanity a code to live by. Terrible things happen when we don't live by that code. One of the fundamental Jewish values is that the moral code is sovereign over all others. That right is prior to might. Therefore, there are moral limits to the use of power. Auschwitz was the final, decisive refutation of the proposition that there are no moral limits to power."

I actually think he rather loses God in all this. Plus, hasn't Israel put might before right at times? "I feel very strongly for the Palestinians. Israel is not just the Promised Land. It is the over-promised land. It has proved one of the epic dramas of which Jewish history is full. Can two dreams co-exist in one land? I think they can co-exist, yes. 'Is Benjamin Netanyahu the man for the job?' 'I don't make political statements.' You're not keen, then? 'I don't think anyone expected Begin to make the great leap with Awarar Sedat. Perhaps in the fullness of time Netanyahu will surprise us in the same way. Whether it will be at the London talks, I doubt.'"

I wonder, lastly, if the modern Jew in Britain has anything to fear, aside from the *Jewish Chronicle* tracking us down and claiming us for their own? Does he see anti-semitism around him? "I do think the taboo that existed for 50 years after the Holocaust is beginning to break. I've seen one or two early warning signs. Christopher Hitchens wrote an article in the *Evening Standard* a few weeks ago where, in effect, he called the Prime Minister of Israel a fascist. That's the sort of thing I wouldn't have seen 10 years ago."

He has to go. He has another meeting. When I get home, I'm not sure I feel any less confused, although it's nice to get the silly dress and lights off. My mother phones. "You'll never wear that dress again? Give it to me - I'll get my money back."



From worms to inflatable friends ... a quirky look at the week ahead

## It's the worms' turn

Don't be surprised if you see hoards of people singing to their front lawns this week. The International Festival of Worm Charming is expected to spark off a craze for the mysterious art. The aim is to try and tempt as many worms as possible to the surface during a 15-minute period. Mechanical diggers and liquid stimulants are banned, but almost anything else goes. Previous methods have included meditation, magic pebbles, Liquorice Allsorts and rwinging a garden fork so the wrigglers think it's raining. It is apparently a highly-skilled business. "People think you just sing them a song and dance on the lawn and they'll sprout from the turf like meat coming through a mincer," one contender said. "But it's a lot harder than that." The world record currently stands at 511 worms in 30 minutes.

## For the love of bats

Another of the nation's less celebrated creatures will be in the spotlight this week. 9-17 May has been designated National Bat Week, with the express purpose of getting us to love these poor misunderstood animals and dispelling our creepy misconceptions. Famous fears of bats swooping down and getting tangled in the hair of unsuspecting victims are apparently unfounded. "Bats have absolutely no desire to wrestle with your hair," a spokeswoman for the Bat Conservation Trust said. "They are not blind and stupid as people seem to think. They are cute and fluffy and do absolutely no harm to anyone."

## Going bananas

If you've got the Monday morning blues today, allow yourself to be cheered by one bit of heartening news. Marks & Spencer has solved the problem of rotting bananas. Most of us are all too familiar with the miserable scenario where you've brought your weekly bunch of Britain's favourite fruit during your Saturday morning shop, only to discover that by Monday they're already starting to go off, and by Thursday they're positively inedible. Thankfully, M&S has come up with the answer. They're introducing a range of "Now and Later Bananas". For a mere £1.49, you get five bananas ready to eat for a couple of days after purchase and five greener bananas that will ripen in the bowl, ready to eat from four days later.



## The big blow-up

Equally smart is a new eco-friendly scheme that takes off in Leeds this week. The city council is introducing Britain's first priority lane for car-sharing vehicles. Drivers who arrange to give their mates a lift to work will be able to glide down the bus lanes and avoid the choking queues of traffic. So while you sit and sweat in the rush hour, your green goody-troshoes colleagues will be able to have an extra half an hour in bed, snugly overtake you on the inside and arrive at work before you. But for the cunning, there is a solution to be learned from our transatlantic cousins. Drones of Americans have beaten such systems by investing in life-sized blow-up dolls, dressing them in a suit, and strapping them in to the passenger seat.

# Mary Bell: ice is the antidote to sympathy for the devil

THE devil has many masks. Most recently, it has emerged in the form of a 41-year-old mother called Mary Bell. A few of us, including Gitta Sereny and myself, believe that these devils are the figment of overheated overripe imaginations. Peel back the mask and you'll find a very human face.

Gitta Sereny's *Cries Unheard* has been pilloried, not only for paying the devil, but for presenting her as one of us. Some have suggested that Bell, who could not have found a more sympathetic biographer, has calculatedly misled Sereny,

ensnared her in a psychological honey trap. June Richardson, mother of one of Mary Bell's victims, has complained that the book "does not tell the whole story"; the murderer's is the only voice we hear.

I, too, have been accused of having sympathy with the devil. In January, my film about paedophiles was broadcast on Channel Four. *The Devil amongst Us* consisted of a series of interviews with men who had, or desired to have, sexual contact with children. The tabloid press and children's charities immediately

called for the film to be withdrawn. I was accused of being duped, and of giving paedophiles a platform. It was claimed that I didn't distance myself enough from my subjects.

I confess: I liked the men I met. They were not monsters. Some were very good company. I enjoyed going out for a meal with them. Others entertained me at their house magnificently, pouring me another glass of wine.

Then, as each meeting moved on late into the night, we'd touch on their attitude to

children. "I think a four-year-old could quite want, even initiate, sex with me," a 49-year-old said. After an evening in his charming company, it was hard to throw up my hands in horror. I would lean back, listen, absorb. It was, frighteningly, almost possible to feel, at that moment, that perhaps being a paedophile wasn't so reprehensible after all.

But as the front door clicked behind me, the comfort of my company seeped away. I abhorred the desires that had been expressed. When I returned home to my young

daughter, I would brutally remind myself, these desires were not abstract. It was my daughter that he would like to have sex with.

What began, for me, as a moment of awareness, became a moment of professional practice. I found it important to provide myself with constant reminders of the true nature of the men I was meeting. While I was eager to get inside their minds, it was important that their world view, their interpretation, their version of events, was not the only one I consulted. It was important to

step outside that claustrophobic interview room. I refused to be seduced.

It is not at all clear how far along the path to seduction Sereny went with Bell. But here is clear evidence that the process had begun. Sereny constantly refers to Bell's humanity, as if this alone were evidence enough for lack of moral culpability for her crime. She notes that Bell is fervently anti-racist, and is careful to record her frequent tears. Her love for her teenage child is presented as extraordinary, as if it weren't the most natural thing

in the world for a woman to care for her daughter. In interviews that are said to have lasted up to 10 hours a day, over a period of five months, it is easy to see how it would be to take that one step back, for the interviewer to refer to a moral order outside the interview room.

Disturbingly, Sereny - a writer who ought to share Graham Greene's "splinter of ice" - describes her feelings towards Bell as "love and affection". If we love someone, we find excuses for them. Current theory presents sexual abuse in childhood as a formula to for-

give almost any crime - from murder, through thievery to further sexual abuse.

Sereny has every right to produce a brave book about Mary Bell. But the quest should not be for forgiveness; it should be for understanding. We must be careful that the humanity of criminals - the friendship, the rear - does not seduce us. While the mo, and much of the media is boiling with rage, we should remain cool. The splinter of ice should never melt.

Dea Birkett



# INDEPENDENT

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## Europe united in a clash of nations

SO THE launch of a single currency for Europe has been celebrated with fireworks – a dispute of the traditional European kind. It is not a dispute about policy. Both candidates for president of the European Central Bank are solid monetary conservatives. It is a dispute about nationality. One is French, one is a German-backed Dutchman. The greatest act of European integration has been launched in a squabble which confirms that the European Union is still a collection of nationalities. Imagine if Alan Greenspan's reappointment as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board had been opposed on the grounds that he came from New York and it was the Californians' turn. If the introduction of the euro really does create a single European super-nation, as it does to some sceptical eyes, then this week-end's squabble should be the last such. No such luck. Nationality will be pitched against nationality for some time to come in the business of the EU.

But the presidency of the central bank, at least, has been settled for the next 12 years: a little-noticed aspect of the deal is that after Wim Duisenberg, the Dutchman, steps down in four years' time, Jean-Claude Trichet, the Frenchman, gets a full eight-year term. Yes, it is a fix and a revealing slice of raw politics. It is against the "spirit" of the Maastricht treaty, which says the bank president's term of office shall be eight years. But is this the "fudge" which would so damage the prospects of success for the euro and against which Tony Blair and Gordon Brown set their faces? Hardly. Much more significant is the fudging of the criteria set out in the treaty for deciding which countries may join the euro. An elastic measuring-tape has been used to check some figures for public debt, and only Greece has been kept out on quality-control grounds. But the markets have known for some time that it will be a "broad euro" not a narrow one – that is part of the reason why the German mark has been down and the pound up – and it would have been peculiar for Messrs Blair and Brown to veto something of which Britain was not part.

The argument over the European Central Bank has produced another charge: that Mr Blair has chaired the talks badly, by failing to square his friend Jacques Chirac in advance of this vital meeting. This is just plain silly: if the French want to kick up a Gaulist fuss about the nationality of a Euro-functionary, there is precious little that even Mr Blair, who has answered the Irish Question and achieved breakthrough in the Middle East, can do about it.

The new central bank may have been undermined by having politicians vend its rules before it is set up. But a much more important question is whether those rules are right. The Duisenberg-Trichet row has drawn attention to the fact that the constitution of the ECB, as laid down in the Maastricht treaty, is flawed. The eight-year, non-renewable term for the president may be modelled on the Bundesbank – the Platonic ideal of central banks – but it is too long. Mr Greenspan is half way through his third four-year term at the Fed, and no one suggests that his effectiveness has been compromised by periodic reappointment. The trouble with the German central bank model is that it equates independence with lack of accountability. The Bundesbank makes its decisions in secret and they are always "unanimous". The ECB is expected to operate in the same way, but the treaty says it "may decide to make the outcome of its deliberations public". It should do so. And Mr Duisenberg should submit himself to regular public questioning by European finance ministers and the European Parliament, just as Mr Greenspan gives evidence to congressional committees and Eddie George appears before the Treasury Select Committee. None of this would compromise the ECB's independence, but openness would strengthen its democratic legitimacy. It seems curious – not to say arrogant – to suggest that the United Kingdom's monetary institutions are superior to Germany's, given the two countries' records on inflation. But apathetically and by accident, in response to failure, we have evolved an independent Bank of England which sets policy openly, with differences of view argued out in public. Politicians do not set interest rates, but the people who do are accountable in the broader sense – an accountability he institutions of the EU desperately lack.

This is an important issue, but in the end it is not going to make the difference as to whether Britain should or should not join the euro. That, as Mr Blair reiterated yesterday, remains a fundamentally economic rather than political question. It is one of the great mysteries of applied economics that, 25 years after Britain joined the Common Market and six years after the creation of the "single market", the British economic cycle remains out of sync with the continental one. Mr Blair's position is not easy, but it is right: to postpone entry until there is genuine convergence, while trying to ensure the constitution of the euro emphasises openness and transparency.

## Bormann is dead, but what about Elvis?

DNA testing may be a great step forward in crime detection and paternity suits, but it will throw tens of people out of work in a valuable cottage industry – that sub-branch of journalism which makes its living from sightings of dead people. Today we report the up-to-the-minute news from 53 years ago: that Martin Bormann is dead. DNA tests on a body in Berlin have confirmed that it is that of Adolf Hitler's sidekick. Since 1945 there have been 6,000 sightings of him, many of them in South America. That means that in future there will be about 100 fewer stories available every year for credulous newspapers to print and credulous readers to read. Let us hope the scientists in the white coats are not let into Graceland to carry out tests which put paid to all the Elvis Presley sightings. Why should the nation be deprived of gems like the *Sunday Sport's* report that the King had been spotted in a fishmonger's in Essex selling bound dog fish?



MILES KINGDON

YES, it's dear old May Bank Holiday again (did you all remember to put your barometers back to "wet and windy" last night?), and for those of you lucky enough to be able to get out and about in the bracing weather today, here are some of the more interesting attractions on offer this May/June:

**Tory in Opposition Celebrations**  
Hyde Park, all day

It's a year since Labour won office, but the Labour birthday partying has overshadowed the fact that it's also a year since the Tory party achieved their long-awaited goal of getting a refresher season in opposition. In fact, since most people saw the purpose of the general election as getting the Tories out, not Labour in, perhaps this non-stop party by the Conservative rump is more significant than any Labour celebration. Attractions include Spot-the-Hague, Write-Alan-Clark's-Diary-for-a-Day, and Give-an-ex-Tory-MP-a-Job-Centre.

**Open House at 13a Bloomsdale Avenue**  
Sutton Coldfield

This is the home of Jack Wetherby, the very first man ever to get through to the French World Cup hotline and buy a ticket! Come and look round this historic place, and hear Jack himself talk you through it! On display is the very telephone on which he dialled, the chair in which he lived for five days while he did it, the bill from BT for £475 (even though he only got through once), and was charged for all the engaged calls!), and the letter from the French World Cup organisers congratulating him and also regretting that they cannot enclose his ticket as it has had to be reallocated to French supporters. A slice of footballing history!

**Grand Water Sale of the Century**  
We've heard of water companies being sold and water shares being floated and water goldmines being sat on, but this is the very

first time we have heard of a genuine water sell-off, with genuine water being sold. Farmer Arthur Critchlow of Gloucestershire recently had his land flooded by fierce storms and rainfall. Staring gloomily out over the flood waters, it suddenly occurred to him that this was exactly what many people were short of. He put up a sign saying: "Water – Siphon Your Own!" and business has been intense ever since. Just off M5 at Spinehoe.

**Lord Irvine's Homebase**  
New out-of-town shopping centre near Windsor. Nice range of wallpapers, paintings, furnishings, hangings etc.

**The Single Currency Road Show**  
Do you want to spend your day off studying the pros and cons of the euro? No, of course you don't. But do you want to know WHY you don't want to do it? Do you want to know what will happen if you DON'T keep up to date with the euro? Did

you know that the euro has a built-in Millennium Bug in it which will render it totally valueless at midnight on 31 December 1999? Did you know that the last statement is totally erroneous and was put round by Peter Mandelson just in case things go very wrong? All this and more, explained at the Single Currency Road Show, in your neck of the woods soon.

**The Vision of Tony Experience**  
See the exact spot where Tony Blair appeared in a vision last week! Eight-year-old Brunnhilde O'Reilly was playing with her Mandy doll outside her home in the small village of Nether Widdley when he appeared to her in the sky and said: "O little girl, is this the right way for Europe? I have been chairing a vital meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders in an effort to keep the peace process going, after my historic intervention in Northern Ireland to keep the peace process going,

and I am now on my way to Europe to chair a vitally important meeting to keep the European Bank going, so I must be on my way, but don't forget to do your homework!" Paranormal experts say they accept the happening as authentic, especially as the man seen in the vision shaking his fist behind Tony's back has since been identified as Alastair Campbell. The spot is already a firm favourite for pilgrims.

**Virtual Reality Mayor-of-London Experience**  
New state-of-the-art exhibition which gives you the direct feeling that you ARE the Mayor of London. You simply sit in the hot seat, strap the harness and helmet on, turn the knob to Archer, Livingstone, Branson, Glenda Jackson, etc, and FEEL what it's like to be in charge of one of the world's top cities, even if you're not one of the world's top people. Afterwards, counselling, medication etc available.



Pollution toll: Workers clearing dead animals and fish from a marsh on the borders of the Doñana nature reserve in southern Spain, a week after toxic waste spilled from a mine nearby  
Photograph: Desmond Boylan/Reuters

## LETTERS

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number  
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

### Risks of staying out

ALL OVER Europe, starting from next year, businesses will begin pricing their goods and services in euro as well as their local currencies, and unless they don't mind losing business British traders will be doing the same. Already, several British banks have said that they will be offering customers the opportunity to bank in euro, and we should expect to see a huge uptake as the benefits of doing so will be very tempting – no exchange costs, more stability in prices, lower interest rates, and more buying power.

All of which leaves British policy-makers in a dilemma, yet again, over Europe. By appeasing Murdoch-inspired public opinion and staying out of monetary union, we risk one of two perils: on the one hand, if the euro is strong, there may well be an undignified scramble out of sterling and into the euro, driving the value of the pound ever downwards as more and more of us decide to conduct our affairs in euro, and sterling atrocities. On the other hand, if the euro is weak, then the pound will boom, with disastrous consequences for jobs and social stability here. Either way, the only ones to profit from Britain's continued exclusion will be those who can afford to speculate on the currency markets – and after the débâcle of Black Wednesday, we have surely had enough of that. Our entry, which increasingly looks as though it will be sooner rather than later, is in danger of resembling a dash to the lifeboats rather than the positive and reasoned choice it should be.

But what if we were to abandon our traditionally superior and jingoistic attitudes to matters European, and instead openly admit to our substantial inter-dependence with our continental neighbours and join up now? What is the worst that could happen? Death? Plague? Hordes of Brussels officials interfering in our cherished ways of life in ever more personal ways? Hardly. The worst that could happen, should we join and the euro fall, would be that we find ourselves in the same boat as France, Germany, Holland and the rest – with a devalued currency. At

least British jobs would be safe.

Whatever the protestations of the europhobes about not taking risks with our currency, there are risks for us whether we are in or out. And given that an early British entry would boost the credibility of the new euro still further, it seems a much better bet to be in than stay out.

ROBIN PRIOR  
Ealing, Middlesex

### Difficult pupils

ANGELA CRUM EWING (letter, 30 April) is right that difficult pupils need professional help, but I disagree with her that it is unreasonable to expect this to be provided by mainstream schools.

There are some enlightened local authorities which provide a counselling service for students. Teachers are neither qualified, nor do they have the time, to address the school-based and personal issues which interfere with everyday school life.

Whilst exclusion does remove a disruptive influence from the class it does not afford the excluded young person the opportunity to address the fundamental reasons for the anti-social behaviour that led to it.

Government needs to recognise the value of one-to-one counselling and provide schools with the finances to provide a supportive, of both students and teachers, professional counselling service.

GEOFF COX  
Rugby, Warwickshire

I AM surprised the Labour government has not grasped the nettle and announced 24-hour, round-the-clock schooling. I am sure there are many parents who work at night and would love to have schools babysit their children for free. Children would also then learn at twice the present rate (as the Government seems to believe that numbers of hours in school equal a direct in-

crease in learning), thus halving the cost of an individual's education.

SUZANNA JACOBY  
Penzance, Cornwall

### Supermarket blight

JAMES CAIRD (letter, 28 April) has little grasp on reality if he thinks that "Ludlow shops have much to gain from new trade which will be attracted by a modern supermarket". Here in Malvern there is an arcade of shops on the doorstep of a modern supermarket; 30 per cent of the shops are empty. The adjacent street, the prime shopping area, has the usual signs of supermarket blight – empty premises, "To Let" signs, and charity shops.

The ecology of towns like Malvern and Ludlow is delicate and little understood, or cared about, by planners, supermarket companies, and central government. A local trader only needs to lose 10 per cent of his business to a supermarket giant to find himself trading at a loss.

It has happened all over England and will continue to happen until planning laws change. Currently it is not acceptable to object to a supermarket development on the grounds that its presence will adversely affect the local quality of life. Why not?

DEREK MAGRATH  
Malvern, Hereford and Worcester

### Gay age of consent

JOHN LITTLE accuses me of advocating an age of consent of 12 ("I'm out with the in crowd", 30 April). This is not true. I have consistently argued for consent at 14 for everyone, gay and straight.

Nearly half of all teenagers have their first sexual experience before the age of 16, most after the age of 14. For this reason, 14 seems a fairer and more realistic age of consent. My motive is to reduce the criminalisation of young people involved

in consenting sex, and remove the legal obstacles to more explicit and effective sex education in schools.

Twelve European countries now have an age of consent of 14, or lower. Sexual rights are human rights, and human rights should not be restricted to those aged 16 and over.

PETER TATCHELL  
OutRage!  
London W1

YOUR Tatchell vs Lytle scenario, (30 April), devoted two full pages to a very tired and now rather irrelevant argument about whether "outing" is justified or not.

This debate went west a good three years ago. The real gay political debate is about whether OutRage!'s direct-action style politics is more effective than the polite lobbying approach of Stonewall (backed as they are by an army of hives). Or indeed, whether the two ought to be working in tandem, given that they are broadly trying to achieve the same thing.

TIM PURCELL  
London SE7

### Financing fillings

THE HEALTH department recommends that dental amalgam fillings should be avoided in pregnant women (report, 30 April). Unfortunately, except in exceptional circumstances, amalgam is the only durable material which the NHS is prepared to pay for in the restoration of carious teeth in a pregnant patient. This latest recommendation makes a mockery of the principle of providing free dental care to women in pregnancy.

It would be appropriate for the Secretary of State to sanction inclusion of the use of composite filling materials in NHS general dental practitioners' fees where they are used in pregnancy.

DR J A HASSAN BDS  
Diss, Norfolk

### Dump the car

VYV HOPE-SCOTT comments on the supposed difficulties of not having a car (letter, 30 April). I have some suggestions.

Go shopping twice a week and buy less in one go; get a taxi (a lot less expensive than you think); honestly work out how much a car costs to run a week; demand home delivery in the price or threaten to take your business elsewhere.

I've also found that selling your car is one of the best ways of reducing your indirect taxation bill. It is easy to find a way out of doing things if you really want to.

STEVE DIXEY  
Cleethorpes

### Caxton's first

CHAUCER'S *Canterbury Tales* was not the first book printed in England (report, 1 May). The first dated book which Caxton produced at his shop in Westminster was the *Dictes or Sayings of the Philosophers*, completed in November 1477. The first known item of any kind printed in England, a letter of indulgence, precedes it by almost a year, being printed by Caxton in December 1476. The first printed edition of *The Canterbury Tales* bears no date but is generally thought to have been printed in 1478.

WILLIAM HALE  
Assistant Librarian  
(Retiree conversion)  
John Rylands University Library of Manchester

### Oldthinkers

C A BANKS (letter, 28 April) uses Orwell's term "oldthink" to refer to incredulous responses to the Millennium Dome, Diana's funeral etc.

I hope that the worrying practice of giving MPs scripts isn't going to mean that people could be charged with thought-crime. Could Tony Blair be worried that not enough people "bellyfeel" his policies, as in "Oldthinkers unbellyfeel New Labour"?

ALEX COCKELL  
Exmouth, Devon

## Your Bank Holiday fun guide to virtual politics



MILES KINGDON

YES, it's dear old May Bank Holiday again (did you all remember to put your barometers back to "wet and windy" last night?), and for those of you lucky enough to be able to get out and about in the bracing weather today, here are some of the more interesting attractions on offer this May/June:

**Tory in Opposition Celebrations**  
Hyde Park, all day

It's a year since Labour won office, but the Labour birthday partying has overshadowed the fact that it's also a year since the Tory party achieved their long-awaited goal of getting a refresher season in opposition. In fact, since most people saw the purpose of the general election as getting the Tories out, not Labour in, perhaps this non-stop party by the Conservative rump is more significant than any Labour celebration. Attractions include Spot-the-Hague, Write-Alan-Clark's-Diary-for-a-Day, and Give-an-ex-Tory-MP-a-Job-Centre.

**Open House at 13a Bloomsdale Avenue**  
Sutton Coldfield

This is the home of Jack Wetherby, the very first man ever to get through to the French World Cup hotline and buy a ticket! Come and look round this historic place, and hear Jack himself talk you through it! On display is the very telephone on which he dialled, the chair in which he lived for five days while he did it, the bill from BT for £475 (even though he only got through once), and was charged for all the engaged calls!), and the letter from the French World Cup organisers congratulating him and also regretting that they cannot enclose his ticket as it has had to be reallocated to French supporters. A slice of footballing history!

**Grand Water Sale of the Century**  
We've heard of water companies being sold and water shares being floated and water goldmines being sat on, but this is the very

first time we have heard of a genuine water sell-off, with genuine water being sold. Farmer Arthur Critchlow of Gloucestershire recently had his land flooded by fierce storms and rainfall. Staring gloomily out over the flood waters, it suddenly occurred to him that this was exactly what many people were short of. He put up a sign saying: "Water – Siphon Your Own!" and business has been intense ever since. Just off M5 at Spinehoe.

**Lord Irvine's Homebase**  
New out-of-town shopping centre near Windsor. Nice range of wallpapers, paintings, furnishings, hangings etc.

**The Single Currency Road Show**  
Do you want to spend your day off studying the pros and cons of the euro? No, of course you don't. But do you want to know WHY you don't want to do it? Do you want to know what will happen if you DON'T keep up to date with the euro? Did

you know that the euro has a built-in Millennium Bug in it which will render it totally valueless at midnight on 31 December 1999? Did you know that the last statement is totally erroneous and was put round by Peter Mandelson just in case things go very wrong? All this and more, explained at the Single Currency Road Show, in your neck of the woods soon.

**The Vision of Tony Experience**  
See the exact spot where Tony Blair appeared in a vision last week! Eight-year-old Brunnhilde O'Reilly was playing with her Mandy doll outside her home in the small village of Nether Widdley when he appeared to her in the sky and said: "O little girl, is this the right way for Europe? I have been chairing a vital meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders in an effort to keep the peace process going, after my historic intervention in Northern Ireland to keep the peace process going,

and I am now on my way to Europe to chair a vitally important meeting to keep the European Bank going, so I must be on my way, but don't forget to do your homework!" Paranormal experts say they accept the happening as authentic, especially as the man seen in the vision shaking his fist behind Tony's back has since been identified as Alastair Campbell. The spot is already a firm favourite for pilgrims.

**Virtual Reality Mayor-of-London Experience**  
New state-of-the-art exhibition which gives you the direct feeling that you ARE the Mayor of London. You simply sit in the hot seat, strap the harness and helmet on, turn the knob to Archer, Livingstone, Branson, Glenda Jackson, etc, and FEEL what it's like to be in charge of one of the world's top cities, even if you're not one of the world's top people. Afterwards, counselling, medication etc available.



## European history was rewritten this weekend – without the UK



GILES  
RADICE

### THE PRICE OF BEING OUT OF THE EURO

DESPITE the haggling over the presidency of the European Central Bank, the special summit in Brussels held over the weekend is genuinely historic: it marks the effective start of the European single currency. The heads of government have agreed that 11 members will participate in economic and monetary union; they have decided on bilateral conversion rates; and they have reached a compromise over the presidency, with the Dutchman Wim Duisenberg staying at least until 2002, when the new euro-notes and coins start to circulate.

Although it would have been preferable if the French had not decided at the last moment to put forward as their own candidate Jean-Claude Trichet (who, it is now agreed, will start an eight-year term when Duisenberg steps down), if a deal had not been struck this weekend it would have been far worse for the euro's credibility. The pity is that despite Tony Blair's vital role in brokering the agreement, his government has decided not to join EMU in this parliament, except in exceptional circumstances.

Last week, the Treasury Select Committee, of which I am chairman, published the report *The UK and Preparations for Stage Three of Economic and Monetary Union*. As the Committee is divided in its views, with a substantial pro-euro majority but also a significant anti-euro majority, we did not discuss the pros and cons of entry nor the issue of timing – contrary to speculative accounts that appeared before the report was published and which have been repeated in *The Independent* and elsewhere. We did say that it would not be possible "to judge clearly and unanimously either the success of EMU or answers to all of the Chancellor's five tests for at least five years", but that led on to the next sentence: "It will remain the case that the UK's decision will have to be made on a political and economic assessment of the balance of national advantage."

What we are saying is that because there will be no certainties either about the success of EMU or the Chancellor's tests, our decision will have to be taken in the broad national interest, on the basis of a comparative political as well as economic analysis of the costs and benefits not only of participation but also of staying out.

In my view, the UK should join sooner rather than later – and probably sooner than the Government's present timetable. I predict that, from this weekend, events will move much faster than people think.

Pressures will build up to join, especially from business and particularly from those involved in finance and trade, which will increasingly deal in euros. Pilkingtons told the committee that it was converting its systems to use the euro because that will help eliminate differences in production costs. ICI said that euro liquidity will spread through the economy. Siemens told us that the euro

would come through the back door. Siemens and British Steel have made it clear that they are anxious for UK suppliers to use the euro. Sainsbury's and Marks and Spencer have both announced that they will accept euros from 2002. In the report we strongly backed the national changeover plan from sterling to euros, announced by the Chancellor, so that business can not only proceed quickly and efficiently once the decision is taken for the UK to join but also so that they can start planning now.

Several witnesses argued that outside EMU the exchange rate is likely to be even more volatile. We have already seen the impact of uncertainties about the start of EMU leading to a strengthening of the pound, to industry's cost. However, once the euro is up and running, there could be an almost equally unsettling sharp depreciation in the value of the pound. British business, like its continental counterparts, prefer stability. From 1 January 1999, business in 11 member states will gain from having a single currency, while British companies may live in an even more unstable environment than now.

The political consequences of exclusion from EMU cannot be ignored. The Labour government has made a good start with its more positive European policy. But it will be far more difficult to play a leadership role now that we have excluded ourselves, at least for the time being, from Europe's most important project, one which will develop further in the next few years. For the moment, the Government has managed to ensure that the informal Euro X committee confines itself to internal EMU issues. But, in the longer term, the UK's self-imposed exclusion from the real powerhouse of the union will carry political costs.

Economic and monetary union will only bring with it big economic benefits, but it

It could be to our lasting national disadvantage to put off the decision to join the euro too long

will also bring the peoples of Europe closer together. The UK should join as soon as possible, not just to minimise the disadvantage of not being in the first wave but, more positively, to help make it a success.

The Government should speed up preparations to join, including informing the British public about EMU and the advantages of joining sooner rather than later. At the moment, the majority are not only sceptical but also ignorant about EMU. The sooner a powerful information campaign starts the better. We in the European Movement will play our full part but the country needs a strong lead from government, as well.

The final say about this momentous decision, of course, remains with the people, and it is certainly true that the cost of an unsuccessful yes campaign will be very high. But the sooner the Government begins to prepare the British electorate for entry, the more likely it is to win the referendum. It could be to our lasting national disadvantage to put off the decision for too long.

Giles Radice is chairman of the Treasury Select Committee and of the European Movement.

## The students in Prague, not Paris, were the true heroes of 1968



ANNE  
MCELVOY

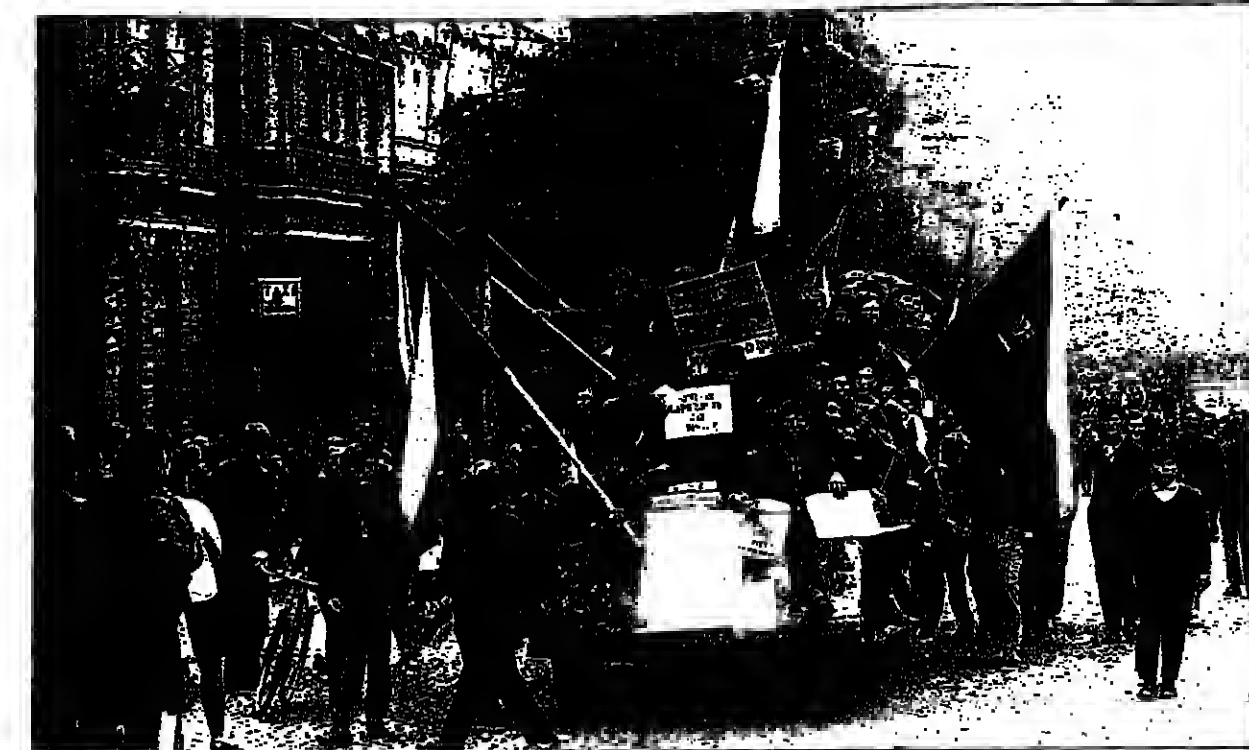
### NOSTALGIA OF THE LEFT

OLD MEN forget. Middle aged ones, when it comes to the anniversary of May 1968, remember the bits that suit them. Fond reminiscences of the eruptions of that year have been served up with all the trendy nostalgia of a veteran describing VE day. A reverential colour supplement piece in *The Guardian* at the weekend presented its key image in a sepia tint, the effect being to suggest an ancient and dignified struggle. The iconography of 1968 is as seductive, potent and evasive as Robert Doisneau's photographs of lovers kissing in the street after the Liberation. In this case, the key image is an artfully fuzzy one of a youth throwing a stone in a balletic arch. We don't see what happens when it hits someone.

I wasn't there – in Paris, Berlin or Grosvenor Square, being three years old at the time and otherwise occupied with inflicting violence on my toys. Perhaps that is why these hallowed reminiscences leave me cold.

The *soixante-huitards* were bored and frustrated by the intellectual and moral constraints of the war generation. Now listening to those former scourges of the bourgeoisie remembering every joint they smoked and every scrawled slogan as if it were a major event in the history of mankind, I catch a whiff of the same mawkish, self-justifying sentimentality that they once attacked in the complacent societies of the post-war "golden age".

Paris remains the star turn of 1968, its place unassailable in the folk-memory of a generation of the radical left. The Prague Spring and its suppression in the autumn by the Soviet invasion is accorded mere supplementary status. Peter Lennon, the filmmaker, describes the reaction to the Czechoslovak uprising among the demonstrators of the Left Bank thus: "When we heard on the 1st May that Czech students had entered Wenceslaus Square carrying banners reading, 'Of our own free will for the first time', the assumption in Paris was that they were at one with the rebellious students of France – that youth's growing



More serious than 'repressive tolerance': Czech students protesting against the Soviet invasion

GAMMA

global stand against the discredited adult world had taken hold."

There is a sort of comic misunderstanding here which reveals the limitations and self-absorption of the western revolutionaries. French students, steeped in *Situationalism*, read the slogans of the Prague revolutionaries as a dreamy philosophical statement. The students in Wenceslaus Square, on the other hand, meant quite literally that they were demonstrating freely on 1 May for the first time and not, as previously, as part of a show of strength organised by the Communist Party.

While the French revolutionaries played with artful slogans, "Be realistic, demand the impossible," the Manifesto of Prague Youth demanded the old, thoroughly realistic rights – freedom of speech and assembly. The exhilarations of Paris certainly cross-fertilised with those of Prague. In both countries, the demonstrators hailed the triumph of the imagination. There is the instinctive link of *Zeigzeis* between the French students' rejection of the staid conformism of de Gaulle's bureaucratic state and the youthful Vaclav Havel and his friends seeking to lift the deadening blanket of Soviet hegemony from his homeland.

We have still not reversed the order of precedence here: Prague was more important than Paris. It deserves the main slot in our memories, because its aims were nobler and because its protesters understood, as only those who have lived under a dictatorship do, what is really important. In Prague, the simple revolutionary demand of Schiller's Don Carlos was made flesh: "Grant us freedom of thought." French students, diffuse in their aims,

then, men did the politics while women were responsible for the housework. Now men made the anti-politics while the women were responsible for providing sex – lots of it, as freely as men desired. Cohn-Bendit, who has moved from New Left to new man, now admits that it was "an enormously sexist time – it took the concerted feminism of the 1970s to make us realise that."

The equal and opposite reaction to the reverential assessments of 1968 is the outright rejection of it doing any good at all. Eldridge Cleaver, the "minister of information" in the Black Panther movement, whose 1968 *Soul on Ice* moved white intellectuals to join the campaign for black liberation,

a war – come quite naturally to us now. The mourners, in the wake of Diana's death and the be-Barboured Countryside marchers were using the same tactic as the students of 30 years ago – telling the powers that be by the sheer weight of their numbers on the street that they will not be ignored.

It was the time that the young staked their claim to live a life different from their parents. That needed to happen. But it also needs to be kept in proportion and viewed with greater discrimination and a touch more self-criticism than the keepers of the flame allow. The lazy, hazy recollections are unanimously light on the fascination with violence of that time. Yet the readiness to provoke or instigate it was the great weakness of 1968. So was the cavalier attitude towards democracy and the rule of law.

In the readiness to forgive or relativise the broken heads and bodies, we glimpse the fatal slide of parts of the project into the bloody anarchy of Italian and German terrorism. The peaceful civil rights movement in Northern Ireland, one of the most hopeful beacons of that year, lapsed quickly back into internecine warfare. The desire for conflict was too deeply rooted in the dynamics of 1968 to produce peace.

Thirty years on, there is hope for a different and a better way. Revolution is easy. Dreams take a little longer.

### The exhilarations of Paris certainly cross-fertilised with those of Prague

the civil rights and Vietnam-protest movements in the US could not rouse themselves to march on Soviet embassies. It wasn't accidental that the key ideological figure for the French students and intellectuals was Mao – he was too far away for them to be confronted with the destruction the Chairman had wreaked on his country. The flight of imagination became a flight from reality.

The *nostalgie de la rue* about 1968 is largely a guy thing. Tariq Ali, Dany Cohn-Bendit, Allen Ginsberg, Andre Malraux, Jean-Paul Sartre – the starring roles were held by men. Nineteen sixty-eight changed the roles of women in the West all right – before

died last week recanting his radicalism in favour of born-again Christianity and Republicanism. "I'm renouncing civil and human rights and fighting for creation rights," he said in a last interview.

But I would not want to live in a society untouched by 1968. The realisation that the parameters of the possible is not something fixed by your elders and betters, that there are alternatives – to a government, a way of life, a career ladder.

## Charity commissioners: a suitable case for retirement



DAVID  
WALKER

### CHARITABLE STATUS

BRITISH government is littered with *Raiders of the Lost Ark*-style boxes. Marked "open at your peril" they lay around Whitehall tempting political Prometheus. Lady Thatcher tried to prise open a couple of them – those marked "Paying for Health Care" and "Property Taxes for Local Government" – and out flew all sorts of nasties. Now our one-year-in-office prime minister seems intent on opening another, that oddly-shaped receptacle bearing the legend: "Why are homes for stray dogs and sick cats classified as charities?"

With the approval (presumably) of the Home Office and Number Ten, the Charity Commission has just launched a

buge exercise in redefining charitable purposes. It is taking "a long hard look at the Register of Charities to consider whether those organisations that currently benefit from charitable status should continue to do so. 'Write to us,' they are saying to the public. 'Tell us what you think the modern ethos of charity should be.'"

There is no question the investigation is long overdue. Here we are, on the eve of the millennium in a post-Christian society, and a Tudor statute and the dictum of a late Victorian judge are still being quoted as definitive guides to what does and what does not qualify as a charity. Neither, incidentally, says anything about cats and dogs, let alone donkeys or marmosets: animals have just crept into their now leading place as the objects of charitable giving.

And that is the problem. To tidy up charity law and administration means confronting profound ideas about what is good, who is deserving, and who merits the top places in the roll-call for our necessarily limited amounts of compassion, let alone free cash. In a pluralist society there are few consensual definitions of "the good", above a small number of platitudes about life and liberty. At a certain level of generality, education may be deemed to be a good thing, but

does it follow that Eton College with its top hats and tails, charging £15,000 a year, should qualify as a charity, let alone the Institute of Economic Affairs or the Social Affairs Unit which – stimulating as their arguments and thoughts may be – are decidedly in the business of persuasion and influence (inside the Palace of Westminster as well as out).

Personally, I have never seen much of a case for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Even the most curmudgeonly libertarian opponent of state action concedes the need for governments to police the continental shelf, which surely includes rescuing drowning mariners. Many would disagree – they show they do by making the RNLI one of the fastest charities in the register, along with Guide Dogs for the Blind, which has more devoted canines than partially-sighted clients.

The difficulty is that "charity" meaning tax privileges (currently worth around £2bn a year) requires the government more or less to say, "this activity is good; this activity is not good." The Charity Commission has a large staff of lawyers whose job it is to sort out the legally approved sheep from the goats – relying on the most arcane and anachronistic of definitions. So, politics is not good

– which seems a queer state of affairs in a democracy. But researching into obscure medical conditions affecting a tiny fraction of the population is deemed to be worth supporting (in terms of taxes foregone), when at the same time the NHS is desperately trying to cut its drugs bill and downsize public expectations that it can, and should, provide a cure for everything.

The Charity Commission is a rather timid outfit in which the natural caution of Home

### Animals have crept into their leading places for charitable giving

Office civil servants has helped further narrow the tunnel vision of lawyers who are forever citing the famed 1891 judgement in *Pemsel's Case*, which said charity came exclusively under four headings – to do with education, the relief of poverty, the promotion of religion and a catch-all definition to do with community benefit. (Of course, categories such as "religion" are nowadays hugely problematic – commentators have a field day

asking sarcastically why the English association of white witches is less deserving of charitable status than the Church of England.)

The Charity Commission denies that it wants anything radical to happen as a result of its review of the register. All it wants is more flexibility of definition so that it can, for example, give more reasonable treatment, say, to organisations that help the unemployed. At present, they are often excluded because the law says that if someone gets a "private benefit" from charity, it should not count. But why do such organisations need to be charities anyway – unless they are hoping for a tax handout which, if public policy were above board, ought to take the form of a grant from government that could be openly discussed and monitored.

Tony Blair – prophet of the "third way" – has opened the box labelled "Intermediate Bodies", those neither part of government nor the market. He may regret it, if he gets deluged, say, by Masters of Foxhounds demanding to know why their sport is not charitable. After all, they will say, it confers all sorts of community benefits in addition to the private enjoyment of the hunters.

But the Prime Minister should persevere. Charity is a

wonderful thing – meaning the act of giving, privately, without fuss and without fiscal advantage. The parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the most beautiful passages in the Gospels. Unsolicited and unrecognised generosity is a fundamental in most world religions. Why not, then, abolish government supervision of charity altogether? If people want to give out of their post-tax income, fine. If organisations want to set up to do their thing and invite public support, let them incorporate as not-for-profit entities under company law and let the Office of Fair Trading supervise their pitches to the public.

If government thinks one activity is better than another, let it say so clearly and transparently and give tax-exempt grants. It already has a template of sorts in the National Lottery scheme – a set of openly-declared objects which the proceeds of that gamble are meant to support. The public seems broadly to support the idea that there is a group of important but peripheral activities – art, sport, do-gooding – that National Lottery money should back. Let the government augment the flow up front – rather than through the back door of tax relief. Why should people need to be bribed to "do good" anyway?

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## Dismay over euro fudge

### Compromise on bank governor could damage single currency

By Jeremy Warner

THERE WAS widespread disappointment among financial commentators yesterday with the last minute compromise solution thrashed out in Brussels over the weekend for the position of president of the new European Central Bank.

"Other than no solution at all, this is about the worst possible outcome for financial markets," said Cesar Molinas, joint head of economic and fixed income research at Merrill Lynch Europe.

"Although this split role solution is not unexpected, the fact that the outcome was the result of political horse trading and satisfying national pride is bound to damage the credibility of the bank, its interest rate policy and the new currency," he said.

However, most pundits agreed that reaction today in capital markets was likely to be relatively subdued. Some markets in the City will be open for business, despite the Bank Holiday weekend, so as to respond to the news, while virtually all Continental and US markets are open.

Technically, Wim Duisenberg has been appointed as president for a full eight-year term, but it has been agreed that the 63-year-old former Dutch central banker will voluntarily retire midway through that period to be replaced by a French nominee, likely to be Jean-Claude Trichet, governor of the Bank of France.

Analysis said European bonds and the German mark might have recent gains after the row. Mr Molinas thought UK gilts and sterling would strengthen, since this was the usual reaction to any setback in the fortunes of the single currency.

Nick Crosby, senior consultant at Price Waterhouse Coopers, said: "French pride has undoubtedly undermined the credibility of the project to some degree, but that doesn't mean it's not going to happen or won't work. Emu has been beset by crisis and impasse right the way through. Even so, it has remained on stream and my advice to companies is get on and prepare for it, because it is going to happen."

The weekend's compromise involves virtually all players in considerably less of a face. Mr Duisenberg is on record as saying he would refuse to do the job unless appointed for the full eight years. Only last week, Hans Tietmeyer, head of the German Bundesbank, warned strongly against fudging the decision.

Mr Molinas said: "It really didn't matter which central banker they gave the job to since they are all hardliners on monetary policy and use much the same methodology. The important thing was not to compromise the terms of the treaty, and that's just what they have done."

Joining Mr Duisenberg on the executive board of the ECB will be Oskar Lafontaine, chief economist at the Bundesbank, Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, head of the Italian stock market regulator, Eugenio Domingo Solans, Bank of Spain board member, Sirikka Hamalainen, Governor of the Bank of Finland, and Christian Noyer, former chief of staff to France's finance minister.

Peter Praet, chief economist at Generale Bank, said the ECB deal could lead markets to conclude the board would have a tightening bias, but noted it comprised only six of the 17 seats on the ECB "governing council", which is responsible for interest rate decisions. The other 11 seats on the council are held by national central bank governors.

"The agreement is precisely the one talked about last week on which the Bundesbank held a meeting and came out with a strongly worded statement," Padraic Garvey of ABN-Amro in Amsterdam said. "The market will expect the Bundesbank to do something. They can either talk or they may feel obliged to act."

The coming week threatens to be turbulent for the new nominees, who on Thursday and Friday face European Parliament members in an open question and answer session about their views on economics and monetary policy.

Parliamentarians have already

said that Mr Duisenberg will be questioned about his plans to step down and have threatened to criticise his candidacy.

The 626-seat assembly has the right to give a non-binding opinion on the appointments before leaders rubber stamp them. It will do so in a vote on 13 May.

The compromise, designed to placate France, will fuel investor concern that the ECB will be subject to too much political influence, undermining its determination to keep inflation low.

That could push up yields on European bonds against US Treasuries, and reverse the mark's 4 per cent gain against the dollar in the past month.

"It will be worrying to the markets that there has already been this much political influence over the ECB," said Phyllis Reed, a European bond strategist at Barclays Capital. "I would expect to see flows into the US and the UK."

The mark rose to 1.7808 against the dollar at the close of trading on Friday from about 1.85 on April 3, gains that could also be at risk when European trading resumes today.

The 11 countries named for the start of the single currency on 1 January 1999 - Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Spain and Portugal - were expected.

Conversion rates for the currency are to be based on exchange rates already in force, ending speculation that any of the 11 currencies will be revalued or devalued. That decision should underpin European currencies, some analysts and investors said.

The agreement rules out changes in conversion rates before the euro is introduced. Some investors had expected that option would be left open, since strong economies, especially Ireland's, may make existing rates incompatible.

To ensure that market exchange rates match the targets by the end of the year, central banks will use "appropriate market techniques," the EC statement said. That means if a currency

## On the board: The ECB's new executive line-up



**WIM DUISENBERG** (above), 63, former head of the Dutch Central Bank and since last year president of the European Monetary Institute, the forerunner of the ECB, is known as a tough-minded hardliner in monetary policy. A recent survey of analysts ranked him the toughest central banker on inflation of all 11 countries set to join Emu, including Hans Tietmeyer at the Bundesbank. Mr Duisenberg is an economist by profession and a former Dutch finance minister.



**CHRISTIAN NOYER**, 47, is a career civil servant whose last job was as chief of staff to Jean Arthuis, France's former finance minister. Since the centre-right government lost power in June, he has been touted for several top jobs at state-owned French banks.



**OTMAR ISSING**, 62, is one of the few members of the Bundesbank's 17-member policy-setting council with no political affiliation. He's known as a die-hard monetarist who speaks his mind forcibly. He was appointed chief economist at the Bundesbank on the eve of reunification.



**SIRIKKA HAMALAINEN**, 59, is governor of the Bank of Finland. Last month she caused bonds across Europe to plummet after raising borrowing costs to keep Finland's soaring economy in check. Her track record in bringing inflation under control is impressive.



**EUGENIO DOMINGO SOLANS**, 53, is a career economist who has been one of the Bank of Spain's executive commissioners since 1994. He has been professor of economics at various universities and has also held posts at a number of banks, including Banco Atlantico.



**TOMMASO PADOA-SCHIOPPA**, 57, is a former deputy governor of the Bank of Italy and was recently appointed the Italian stock market's chief regulator. He has also chaired the Basel Committee for Banking Supervision at the Bank for International Settlements.

## PowerGen in merger talks with US giant

POWERGEN, Britain's second largest electricity company, is exploring the possibility of a merger with Houston Industries, one of the largest power suppliers in the US, to form an Anglo-American combine with a market value of more than £10bn.

The talks are at a very preliminary stage, and even if a deal is struck it could take several months to come to fruition. However, both sides are keen to push ahead, the two managements have already established a close rapport and there has been a general meeting of minds over the way ahead.

One source put the odds of a deal at better than 50 per cent, although he acknowledged that there were considerable regulatory and valuation barriers to surmount before terms could be agreed.

PowerGen has been frustrated in its attempts to expand in the UK by buying a regional electricity company (Rec). Ed Wallis, the chairman, has been saying for months that the group might as a result be forced to switch its attention to the US. Since then, PowerGen has explored the possibility of a deal with a number of US players including Central and South West and Cinergy, both of which have bought UK Recs.

National Power, Britain's largest power generator, is also being wooed by the Americans but has so far adopted a more sceptical and independent stance. A big stumbling block to any deal with a US player is that US electricity companies tend to be more highly valued than their UK counterparts. This makes a straight takeover by PowerGen or National Power of a US company virtually out of the question and even a merger difficult to achieve in a way which is advantageous to UK shareholders.

Both PowerGen and National Power, face intense competitive pressure in their core domestic market, with some analysts predicting that profits and dividends will shortly be under threat in the absence of aggressive international expansion.

The same logic applies to the main US players, who are facing increasingly fierce competition in their own back yard as deregulation of the energy market begins to bite. With everyone thinking along the same lines, there has been what one source describes as "an orgy of transatlantic talks".

## Body shop in talks with US partner

BODY SHOP is in talks with a US partner over its US business. "We are in negotiations with a US partner but can't disclose the name until a deal is signed," said a Body Shop spokeswoman. She said the company may reveal the partner's name when it produces full-year results on 12 May.

## Ford eyes Cosworth

FORD has started talks with Vickers engines and engineering arm, Cosworth, according to weekend reports. Volkswagen also wants Cosworth and is expected this week to bid £430m for Rolls-Royce Motors in an attempt to defeat BMW's £340m offer.

VW has signalled it may be prepared to pay up to £170m for Cosworth, but analysts believe Vickers does not want to sell to the German group. The German magazine *Der Spiegel* reported on Saturday that the management of Vickers was considering VW's increased offer, which amounted to £400m for Rolls and £100m for the engine manufacturer Cosworth.

## Hillsdown demerger

HILLSDOWN Holdings is expected this week to unveil a radical £1.3bn restructuring. The company is expected to demerge its furniture and housebuilding businesses, worth a combined £550m.

## Do It All sale

BOOTS is in discussions with several large venture capitalists to sell its Do It All chain of stores for up to £100m, *Sunday Business* newspaper said. No one at Boots was available to comment on the report.

## Rethink on Random

Berlelmann is withdrawing its application with the US Federal Trade Commission to buy Random House and plans to resubmit it in a form which provides more information on the purchase's impact on US publishing.

## MPC man warns on single regulator

By Lea Paterson

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to lump together under one roof banking supervision and other forms of financial regulation comes in for sharp criticism in a new book co-authored by a member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee.

A group of influential academics - including Professor Charles Goodhart of the MPC - will later this month publish a wide-ranging review of financial services regulation, including a thorough critique of the Government's proposed amalgamation of the nine existing City regulators.

*Financial Regulation, why, how and where now?*, which is published in association with the Bank of England, is set to cause ripples in the City. The book warns that single financial regulators, such as the new Financial Services Authority (FSA), might trigger cultural conflicts, wield excessive power and become over-bureaucratic.

It argues that official regulation should take a back seat to self-regulation by City firms and stresses that City regulators should be publicly accountable.

The book also suggests the public's excessive expectations of regulators run the risk of creating "an unacceptable extent of intrusion, distortion and cost".

In a foreword to the book, Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, calls its publication "opportune... at a time when the future conduct of financial regulation and supervision is in a state of change". Mr George adds that the book "should help inform and guide the continuing debate".

One way of achieving this could be for firms individually to agree a series of internal risk management targets with their regulators. Failure to meet these targets would automatically result in penalties.

Professor Goodhart stressed that different types of financial services required different types of regulation. In particular, he said, there was a strong case for regulating banks differently from other types of financial institutions.

He also argued for separating regulation of "wholesale" activities - transactions between two financial institutions - from that of "retail" activities - transactions between an individual and a financial institution.

The differing regulatory requirements of different financial institutions mean there could be a cultural clash within mega-regulators such as the FSA, the book argues. Professor Goodhart explained: "There is a culture of worrying about Aunt Agatha's investments and there is another culture of worrying about systemic issues [such as banking crises]. There were concerns that a single regulator could become overly worried about 'Aunt Agatha's' problems and 'take its eye off the banking ball'."

According to Professor Goodhart, "there is a great deal to be said" for an alternative approach outlined in the book which proposes a separate systemic regulator for banks. He also makes the case for public accountability of regulators.

"It is arguable there should be a body to whom Howard Davies [head of the FSA] and other key people in the FSA should, in a sense, report to". However, he said it was difficult to know who this body should be, as MPs could be "leak-prone" and regulators frequently needed to investigate highly confidential issues.

*"Financial Regulation, why, how and where now?"*, by Charles Goodhart, Philipp Hartmann, David Lewell, Lilianna Rojas-Suarez and Steven Weisbrod, will be published by Routledge on May 21.

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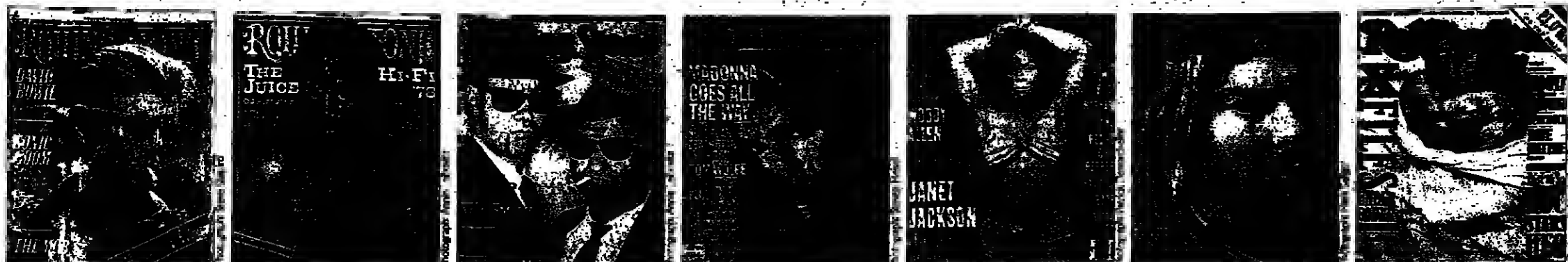
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Face value (left to right): David Bowie (1976); John Lennon (1977); John Belushi as The Blues Brothers (1979); Madonna (1984); Janet Jackson (1985); Kurt Cobain (1994); David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson (1996)

# 'Rolling Stone' – Rock of Ages



Kate Watson-Smyth pays a 30th birthday tribute to the magazine that has defined the modern generation

**M**ICK JAGGER has graced its cover 19 times and Dr Hook lamented in song that they never would. It has featured everyone from Bill Clinton and Woody Allen to Madonna and the Spice Girls, and now *Rolling Stone*, the original rock'n'roll magazine is 30 years old.

Born of the flower-power movement in San Francisco in the Sixties, by favouring lengthy interviews and articles, written and designed in a sober fashion, *Rolling Stone* created the first mass-market publication in which popular music was written about with "intelligence and respect". And as the music moved into the mainstream, the approach spread to include politics, sports, crime and "all other forms of American social behaviour, pathological or otherwise".

The first issue, on 9 November 1967, featured John Lennon on the cover and signalled the importance that photography would later assume. All 728 covers have now been gathered into a book, *Rolling Stone: The Complete Covers 1967-1997*.

Jann Wenner, founder and editor, said the first cover was a "wonderful revealing accident". "When I first started the magazine, I didn't understand the importance of a cover and all the things that a cover can do... that one little photograph speaks volumes about the marriage of music and movies and politics that came to define *Rolling Stone*."

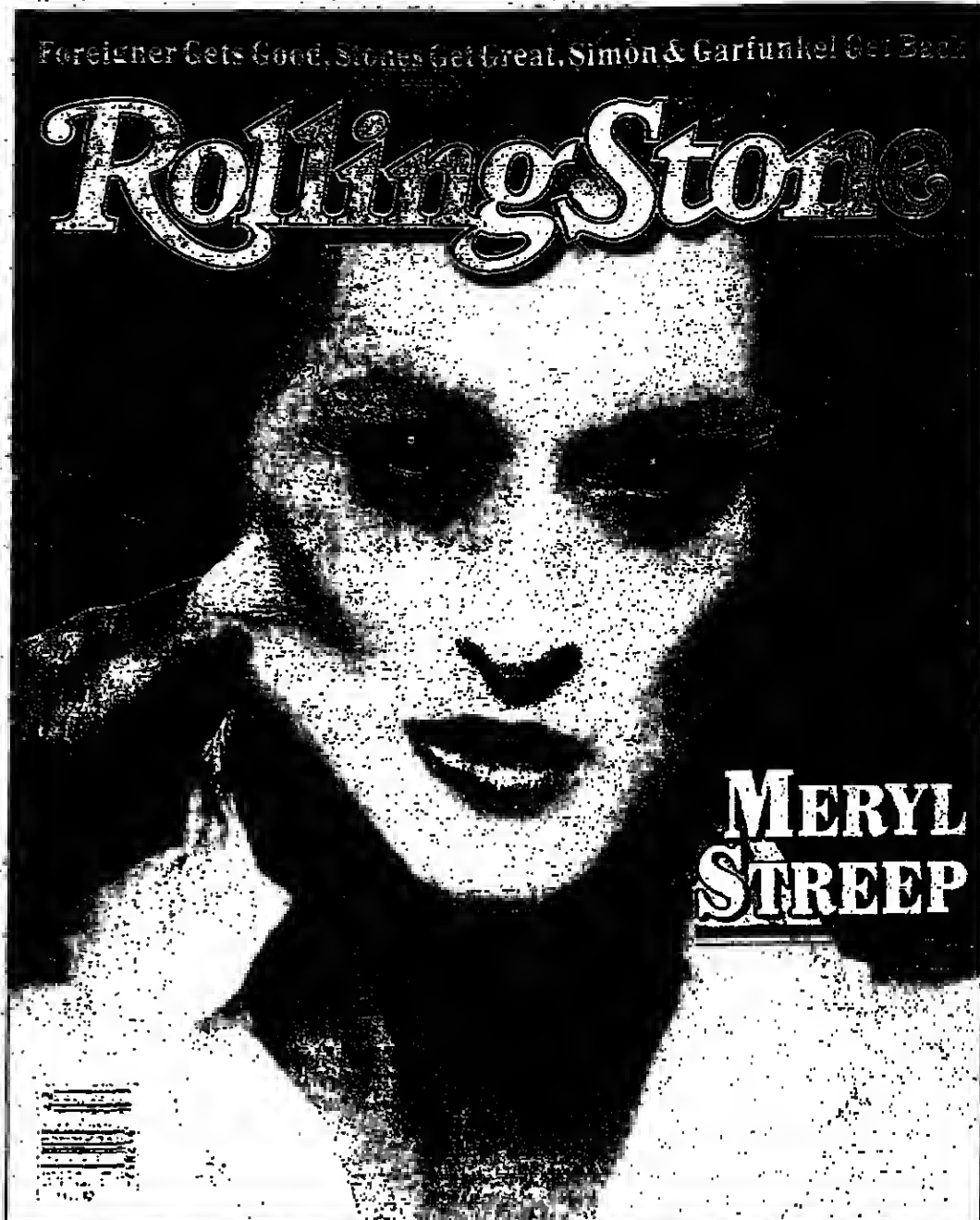
The first woman to shoot a cover was Linda Eastman, later McCartney, who photographed Eric Clapton in 1968. Two years later, a 20-year-old art student named Annie Leibovitz arrived at the office with her portfolio. She became the magazine's second – and most celebrated – photographer.

As her work matured, so the covers became a series of portraits celebrating the new aristocracy of rock and its evolution: Mick and Keith, Paul and Linda, Lennon and Ono, Bowie and Springsteen; the death of Elvis and the rise of Punk and then Madonna. They became works of art in themselves.

The magazine's journalism – particularly its set-piece interviews – thrived. And not just with rock'n'roll stars. In 1975, *Rolling Stone* had what Wenner has since described as the "scoop of the Seventies" – the Patti Hearst kidnapping. It had the story of her year on the run – her abduction, her travels,



Cover version: The inaugural issue featuring John Lennon (top left); Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, photographed by Annie Leibovitz, in 1975; and Meryl Streep, also by Leibovitz, in 1981. Streep said of such celebrity: "One day you're passing the news stand and there's your face on the cover of a magazine; a week later, you're on the subway and there's that cover, with your face, on the floor. Somebody's probably pissed on it"



her conversion to "Tania" – and just as the magazine was about to go to press she was captured. That issue, "The Inside Story", made headlines around the world.

Some 23 years later, *Rolling Stone* has once again triumphed by capturing the rights to the new cover by Tom Wolfe. It is the author's first major opus since *Bonfire of the Vanities* and there has been an intense and secret bidding war.

But *Rolling Stone* won the day, largely because Wenner knows Wolfe of old. The magazine serialised *Vanities* in its entirety in 1987, and back in 1973 a series of articles by Wolfe about astronauts gave birth to his book *The Right Stuff*.

Wenner also launched the careers of Hunter S Thompson and Joe Eszterhas, writer of *Basic Instinct* and other Hollywood blockbusters.

Wenner said Thompson's first assignment was to write about his nearly successful attempt to be elected sheriff in Aspen, Colorado. "He first showed up in my office wearing a grey bubble wig, with a huge satchel full of God knows what and three

six-packs in his other hand, and talked for an hour straight." Thompson's two-part drugs-fuelled odyssey, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, provided two of the magazine's most memorable covers, drawn by Ralph Steadman. Covers by the British cartoonist would also illustrate Thompson's documentation of the fall of Richard Nixon. Both became books.

Today, as the book shows, the covers reflect mainstream global culture: typical is David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson in embrace. But back when the magazine was at its hippest high, being on the cover of *Rolling Stone* became as much a part of the rock'n'roll experience as the double live album. As Peter Buck, of REM, said in 1991: "This is a day like I thought being a pop star would be like when I was a kid. You get in the limo, you go across town to do a photo session, you buy a shirt and then wear it right away and get photographed for the cover of *Rolling Stone*."

■ *Rolling Stone: The Complete Covers 1967-1997*, published by Abrams; £25.

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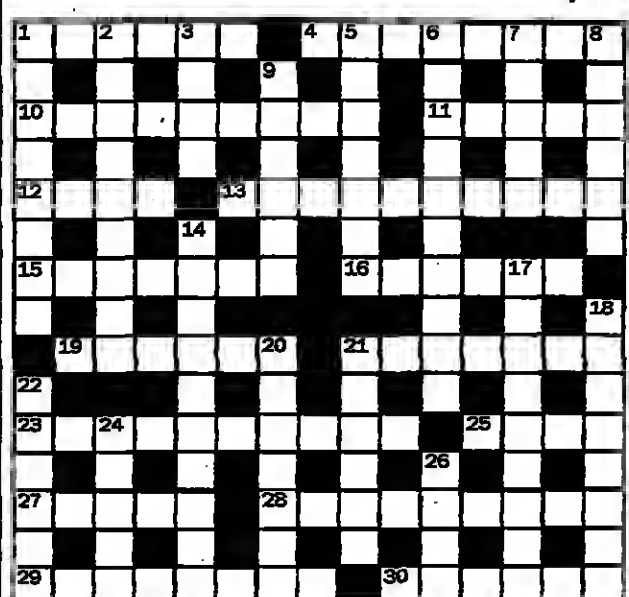
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### THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3681, Monday 4 May By Fortia



- ACROSS**
- Hear of a famous dramatist in Buckinghamshire (6)
  - Bob's reckoning to find Australian animal (8)
  - Meant to put initial doubt before one chap (9)
  - Present's made of fine metal dipped in gold (5)
  - Brief excessive love for German Emperor (4)
  - Rose plants outside are newly in bud (10)
- DOWN**
- Get the wrong number? (8)
  - Due to join a course now (5,4)
  - Commonly given notice of expiry (4)
  - Short of work experience (7)
  - Have more sense but isn't improving, we're told (4,6)
  - Home amusement seen as a joke (2,3)
  - End up holding a raw beginner's rope (6)
  - Substitute most of the contents (4,2)
  - Tax office is after one's money (10)
  - I trundle out key musical item (9)
  - Be n't to George about one who complains (8)
  - Mine object to a number of figures (7)
  - Reason to suppose fool is taken in (6)
  - Coca-Cola therapist hides period of anxiety (6)
  - Restrictive of our liberty in general (5)
  - Look cautiously up and down (4)

- Youngster crowded out guy completely (2,3,4)
- Rex's original leading man (8)
- Show advanced level games inside (6)

- DOWN**
- Get the wrong number? (8)
  - Due to join a course now (5,4)
  - Commonly given notice of expiry (4)
  - Short of work experience (7)
  - Have more sense but isn't improving, we're told (4,6)
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